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## Raising metacognitive genre awareness in L2 academic readers and writers

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# **Raising metacognitive genre awareness in L2 academic readers and writers**

Aleyda Lizeth Linares Cáliz



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: Prof. dr. C.M. de Glopper

Dedicated to Jessa Fiorella,  
the light of my life.



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

The present study deals with reading and writing in second language environments. More specifically, it explores genre-based learning in Spanish speakers studying TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) in Honduras. TEFL in our study refers to the learning of English for teaching purposes by students whose native language is not English and the target language is therefore not the language of the community (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Academic reading and writing skills have gained considerable recognition in higher education all over the world due to expansion of the global market and the increasing interest of students to become successful in academic contexts (Hyland, 2006). However, in L2 language environments, teaching and learning these skills have proved to be a challenging activity (see Hyland, 2003a).

According to Hyland (2006), new ways of teaching writing in higher education should prepare students for a critical understanding of the varied contexts and practices of academic communication in order for them to be able to “successfully navigate their learning” (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p. 1). In our view, this goal can be accomplished by engaging learners in genre-based tasks that provide opportunities for critical analysis and production of texts that they will encounter in their academic and disciplinary communities. This approach takes on writing from a comprehensive perspective that involves not only the cognitive but also the social aspects of written discourse (see Atkinson, 2002; Kellog, 1994; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). Genre-based approaches, in particular, do take into account the importance of writing processes, but most importantly, they highlight the importance of how discourses from a variety of social contexts shape language (Hyland, 2004). This is the approach that guided our study.

Genre has become a powerful notion in second language teaching and research (Hyland, 2004) because it provides new ways of talking about language and its use in particular contexts (Hyland, 2006). It has also helped to understand writing beyond textual forms (Hyland, 2003) and emphasized the purpose and context of writing. For this reason, genres are defined as resources for getting things done (Hyland, 2003, p. 18) or as goal-oriented, staged social processes (Martin, 1992). From a New Rhetorical view (more details will be given about genre-based traditions later in the chapter), Bawarshi and Reiff (2010), state that genre is connected to

the knowledge of the situation in which we communicate, the kinds of things we say, and the kinds of things we want to accomplish (p. xi). Genre becomes influential in helping learners reflect on linguistic patterns (metalinguistic awareness), analyzing rhetorical aspects of writing tasks to adapt meaning, or structuring texts to the demands of the context or writing situations (Hyland, 2003). In a few words, knowing about genre is crucial to understand writing, and most of all, to understand how language is used in particular social contexts.

This study centers more specifically on EAP learners. EAP (English for Academic Purposes) commonly refers to the study of “specific communicative needs and practices of particular groups in academic contexts” (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p. 2). Writing instruction in this view takes students to the point of developing the necessary communicative skills in English to function effectively in academic and cultural contexts (2002). In Honduras, L2 writing instruction has been centered around the production of texts in a mechanical way, that is, without leading students to an understanding and/or critiquing of language conventions, rhetorical or ideological aspects of discourse (researcher’s personal experience as a writing instructor). In fact, writing instruction is often permeated with exhausting corrections on language structures and an individualistic approach to producing meaning in the L2. Within this context, academic writing instruction in Honduras focuses on language structures, language functions and, in particular, in writing process models (see Hyland, 2003, for ways to organize writing teaching) rather than on analysis, understanding and critical thinking of linguistic and rhetorical aspects of discourse and how they are used to construct meaning in the L2.

In general, literacy skills in Honduras are characterized by low levels of academic performance. In 2012, national statistics showed that students enrolled in the third cycle of education (7-9<sup>th</sup> grades), obtained a global percentage of 64% in reading and writing skills in Spanish (see National Report for Academic Performance in Spanish and Mathematics, 2012, 1-9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Ministry of Education, Honduras). Statistics also show that in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, for example, only a 32% of students show satisfactory academic performance. Although these reports indicate that students have had a relative improvement with regard to previous years, it is evident that academic performance needs to be improved from its foundation in order to obtain better results in higher educational levels.

## 1.1 Background of the study

In Honduran universities, writing instruction has been greatly influenced by the North American pedagogies that have branched out of ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching (see Matsuda, 2003). Within these pedagogies, the process-oriented approach has been greatly favored and popularized mainly because of its emphasis on the processes involved in the organization and production of meaning (2003). Adopting a cognitive perspective, this approach views the writer as an “independent producer of texts” (Hyland, 2003a, p. 10). The main point of writing instruction is to lead students through the stages of planning, drafting, and revising ideas through an emphasis on metacognitive strategies that students apply throughout the different stages (Flower & Hayes, 1981). This approach became a paradigm shift in second language writing instruction in the 1980s in U.S. and it has also influenced writing instruction at the UPNFM for the most part (TEFL Curriculum Design, UPNFM, 2008).

The contributions of the process-oriented approach to writing itself and writing instruction have been reported in the literature sufficiently (see Hyland, 2003, 2004; Matsuda, 2003; Raimes, 1991). However, concluding results on its effectiveness remains questionable. One main criticism is that it neglects attention to the “social nature of writing or the role of language and text structure in effective written communication” (Hyland, 2003a, p. 13). Instead, this approach emphasizes the internal or psychological factors of the writing process which tends to weaken the social and cultural value of writing. According to Johns (1987), these types of approaches may lead learners to get distant from the text as culturally-embedded artifacts and may not benefit those “learners who are linguistically, socially or culturally different from mainstream academic language and discourse” (p. 13).

Since this approach has had such a great influence in Honduras, a common instructional practice is to ask learners to create texts on their own by brainstorming ideas on topics and genres (mainly essays) that are basically suggested by the textbooks or the teacher himself/herself (researcher’s personal experience). Another common practice is that writing instructors focus on the “academic paper” as the most important and valuable genre over other kinds of genres relevant to the learners’ academic or disciplinary field e.g., editorials, summaries or critical reviews. This has resulted in a simplified view of academic writing by both teachers



and students which reveals very little awareness of genre in academic contexts. The instructional process begins with brainstorming of ideas or discovery of meaning, a process in which learners tend to feel a high level of tension and uncertainty in the shaping and organization of academic texts. It is our view that these teaching practices strongly rooted in university education in Honduras call for an examination and revision of L2 writing theory and pedagogy.

Genre-based approaches have received considerable attention in the last decade due to the increasing recognition that writing is not only related to the writer's internal processes (Hyland, 2007). These approaches have turned to the social contexts in which writing takes place by envisioning the writer as a social being and the production of texts as genres (Johns, 2002). By interpreting and producing academic genres, L2 learners not only acquire the conventions of producing meaning in particular social contexts, but also strategies for understanding their writing processes. Writing processes here are characterized as varying, dependent on the writer's personal background, the demands of the context, the role of the writers, and the constraints carried by the genre in use (Johns, 2003). Thus, literacy classrooms that focus on genre-based learning have the potential for "developing learners' awareness and critique of communities and their textual practices" (Johns, 1997, p. 19).

The main goal of this study is therefore to explore if and how L2 learners develop genre awareness through the implementation of a genre-based approach and metacognition in an EAP context and how it translates into academic reading and writing skills. In our view, genre-awareness pedagogy can provide an alternative approach to genre acquisition. While genre acquisition implies the adoption of genre as reproduction of template forms (Johns, 2011), genre awareness refers to a dynamic and evolving understanding of genre and writing in general (Devitt, 2004). It implies the development of *rhetorical flexibility* so that learners are able to adapt previous rhetorical knowledge to new contexts (Johns, 2008). In this process, learners develop conscious awareness of strategies to transfer knowledge from one writing context to another which in turn requires learners to acquire metacognitive knowledge as suggested by Negretti and Kuteeva (2011). This knowledge would allow L2 learners to adapt, apply and assess cognitive strategies while performing genre-based tasks in a variety of situations.

In our interest to adopt a comprehensive theory and pedagogy to second language writing, we have implemented a genre-awareness approach to second language writing, but more specifically we have focused on the notion of metacognitive genre awareness (see Negretti and

Kuteeva, 2011). This notion refers to the metacognitive processes applied to the study of genre, discourse and rhetorical aspects of academic texts (2011, p. 96). Negretti and Kuteeva link up genre awareness with knowledge of how and when to apply cognitive strategies to understand genre and rhetorical aspects of writing. Following Negretti and Kuteeva's (2011) research, we argue that metacognitive genre awareness entails genre awareness and knowledge of metacognition as interrelated aspects. This notion is thought to have potential in genre-based learning since it has been reported that literacy development entails rhetorical awareness, among other factors (see Haas, 1994; Negretti, 2012). Scarce research on metacognitive aspects of writing, and in particular on the effect of genre-based instruction in novice learners, makes it necessary to implement studies on this notion to provide further insights on how L2 learners first develop metacognitive genre awareness and how this knowledge ultimately transfers into the analysis and composition of academic texts in English.

## **1.2 Research setting and context description**

This study took place at the National Teaching University Francisco Morazán (UPNFM) of Honduras. The UPNFM is the national teaching university in charge of providing formal education (including ongoing professional development) to pre-service and in-service teachers for all levels of the educational system, in particular for secondary levels of education (see website [www.upnfm.edu.hn](http://www.upnfm.edu.hn) for additional information on the institution). The students involved were 12 TEFL learners in their second or third year of studies. At this stage, TEFL learners are in the process of developing their linguistic and academic competencies that prepares them for further specialized training in the program (for more details on participants, see Ch. 4). At the moment of data collection, students were registered in a reading and writing course taught in the TEFL program and required during the second year of studies. The main goal of the course was to improve learners' academic reading and writing skills in English and demanded a high-intermediate level of English proficiency. Therefore, the study was classroom-based and focused on EAP skills of students majoring in TEFL studies.

The TEFL program is one of the largest programs offered at the UPNFM. In 2010, it held one of the highest rates of enrolled students in the Faculty of Humanities with a number of 1,137 students. From this population, 140 graduated as teachers of English and 25 entered master's

programs to pursue studies at the graduate level (see UPNFM statistics at <http://www.upnfm.edu.hn/>). These statistics show the impact of the TEFL program for the national market and the need to train learners in advanced academic skills to prepare them for successful academic and professional work.

Currently, the UPNFM has adopted the competency-based curriculum approach established by the Tuning European Model (see <http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningal/> for Tuning Project in Latin America). According to this model, learners need to be endowed with the necessary generic and specific competences that will prepare them for an effective personal and professional life (Villa Sanchez & Poblete Ruiz, 2008). Regarding the TEFL curriculum, learners need to develop generic, professional-specific (pedagogical-didactic) and discipline-specific competences (TEFL curriculum redesign, 2008). Among discipline-specific competences, one of the fundamental competences is to demonstrate communicative competence (see document on the curriculum redesign of the TEFL program, 2008), which involves being able to communicate in written form accurately and fluently. Communicative competence here is defined within the framework of Canale and Swain (1980) that entails four different areas of knowledge and skills: (1) grammatical competence; (2) sociolinguistic competence; (3) discourse competence; and (4) strategic competence (see Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 71, for further details). Therefore, the TEFL program must guarantee that learners obtain and develop the necessary knowledge and skills to be competent users of the language socially and academically.

Research on academic writing in Honduras, and particularly, in university education remains to be an unexplored area with very limited access to bibliographic resources and data. This is the main reason for which we have mostly relied on the teacher-researcher's anecdotic experience and a few bibliographic resources. A useful and related article we have found is that of Kintella (1999). This article illustrates how immigrant students studying ESL courses in the U.S., including those from Honduran background, struggle with academic tasks. One of the main difficulties reported on these students is the lack of preparation in critical competencies which are necessary to enter college or higher education. Some other difficulties relate to the knowledge of subject matter, social and academic language proficiency, lack of sophisticated literacy and problem-solving skills, and a lack of repertoire of independent learning and study strategies. In fact, in a recent study on the use of the essay as a constructivist pedagogical strategy, Matute, Martínez and Gómez (2014) state that written skills, and in particular, academic

writing skills are “one of the major challenges to overcome by university students in Central America” (p. 9). In addition, they recognize that higher educational institutions have to take an important role to contribute to learners’ literacy skills.

In the TEFL program at the UPNFM, L2 learners generally show similar challenges as the ones reported above in terms of academic reading and writing skills. More specifically, they report having problems with academic tasks due to the lack of writing experience. They also report to be affected by the lack of academic and specialized vocabulary, lack of subject-based knowledge, difficulties to organize the information and structure texts, problems at the moment of starting to writing—includes understanding of the rhetorical problem—problems identifying the genre and the rhetorical context, and some others report problems at applying strategies to approach the writing task (anonymous students from Reading and Writing Workshop, UPNFM, III quarter, 2014).

Accordingly, the present study embraces the idea that L2 writing instruction at the UPNFM can be greatly improved through the implementation of writing approaches that call for students’ understanding of writing processes, but at the same time, understanding of the relationships between texts and contexts as suggested by Negretti and Kuteeva (2011). In our view, genre awareness is a potential pedagogical approach to L2 writing instruction because it enhances critical ways to engage students in the analysis and production of texts. With this purpose in mind, our study explores the benefits of a genre-based approach that focuses on both critical reading and writing skills of three argumentative genres: letters to the editor, résumés and cover letters and critical response papers. We focus on argumentative genres mainly because of the role they play in developing learners’ reasoning skills (see Voss & Means, 1991), which are traditionally overlooked in Honduran education.

Given the current time of curriculum transformation and evaluation at the UPNFM, undertaking research that contributes to the implementation of teaching methodologies that enhance learners’ academic and communicative competence is crucial and significant. In addition to this, since the present study is classroom-based it may not only contribute to enhance learners’ communicative skills but also to inform teaching faculty about new ways to teach L2 reading and writing in the TEFL program.

### 1.3 Development of the field

Over the last few decades, genre has taken a central role in both first language composition studies and second language writing (Tardy, 2006). Reconceptualization of genre has shaped contemporary genre theory into a robust theoretical framework for writing scholars, researchers and practitioners. However, there are different genre traditions and schools that have contributed to research and pedagogy in different ways making genre scholarship a difficult area to understand (Hyon, 1996). These three main traditions are the New Rhetoric School, The ESP (English for Specific Purposes) approach and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), known as the "Sydney School" (1996). Though they agree on the importance of linking text and context to explain regularities of purpose, form and situated social action, they differ in the emphasis they give to text or context, research methods and pedagogical approaches they apply (Hyland, 2003b).

The Sydney School, based on the linguistic work of M.A.K Halliday (1978), is concerned with the functions language serves in social settings or in the wider culture. SFL proponents are particularly interested in developing genre-based curricula for primary, secondary school children and adult migrant learners of English (Martin, 2009). Their pedagogy is centered on macro-genres found in the Australian culture that students need to master because of their relevance to academic life (Johns, 2003).

The ESP approach, on the other hand, is a more eclectic approach to genre analysis interested in the academic and linguistic needs of non-native speakers of English, mostly adults, undergoing academic studies or developing professional work (Hyons, 1996). This movement has focused on EFL settings specifically and has been largely influenced by Swales' work (1986, 1990, 2004). ESP practitioners focus on the organizational structures and lexico-grammatical features of texts that students are likely to find in their disciplines or professional jobs. They have moved towards genre analysis as it evolves in social contexts of use and written discourse (Johns, 2003).

Finally, the New Rhetoric School, more influential in North America, is another well-known approach to genre analysis that provides the theoretical foundation for our study. New Rhetoricians have been influenced by the reconceptualization of genre provided by Carolyn Miller (1984). In her study "Genre as social action" genre is reconceptualized as "typified

rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations” (p. 159). Miller’s study provided the basis for studying genre from a rhetorical perspective, that means, not in the classical view of genre as a framework to classify texts, but on the premise that genre represents people’s practices and responses to recurrent social patterns. As a result, genres’ value resides in their usefulness to help people to accomplish things (common ends) in particular contexts.

This school is part of the contextual approaches to genre analysis. Contextual approaches are those that start with the analysis of the rhetorical situation in which texts are situated rather than with analysis of lexico-grammatical features within the text (Johns, 2002, p. 9). In this perspective, the construction of meaning is predominantly social and therefore the interpretation and composition of texts cannot occur in isolation from the context in which they originate. This process suggests the development of genre awareness to help learners negotiate genres to situations and adapt their rhetorical strategies to every writing task instead of approaching writing as a mechanical and isolated activity. This school provides the foundation for our conceptualization of genre.

A key concept in our study is genre awareness. It refers to “assisting students in their development of rhetorical flexibility necessary to adapt their socio-cognitive genre knowledge to ever-evolving contexts” (see Johns, 2011, p. 57). In simple words, developing the ability to identify genres to their situations (and vice-versa) instead of getting used to “fixed” ways of constructing meaning becomes a central goal to second language writing instruction. Similarly, Devitt (2004) places genre awareness at the center of genre-based instruction so that learners acquire a better understanding of the rhetorical purposes and contextual meanings that surround new genres. Genres, in this sense, are not to be learned as a set of features but as learning strategies to acquire new rhetorical knowledge. Moreover, Negretti and Kuteeva (2011) claim that genre awareness entails metacognition and thus research on the connection between these can contribute to a better understanding of how learners benefit from genre-based instruction.

Negretti and Kuteeva (2011) suggest that if research is to be done on the benefits of genre-based learning, we need to go in depth on how learners benefit from it, what they learn from it, and how they incorporate the insights from genre-based instruction into their own writing (p. 96). In agreement with their research, we claim that metacognition and genre awareness should be linked due to the consciousness raising needed to develop understanding and application of genre-based concepts, discourse and rhetorical aspects of writing. As a result, analyzing L2

learners' reflections throughout their genre-based tasks is thought to be relevant to determine how they build genre awareness and how this influences their strategies and choices to interpret and write academic texts. Because of the implications and relevance of Negretti and Kuteeva's (2011), their research has been used as the main reference to the present study.

It is our assumption that giving learners access to a variety of genres and strategies to analyze how language connects to contexts of situation can be useful at enhancing reading and writing in the L2 (see Hyland, 2004; Johns, 1997; Devitt, 2004). In addition to this, genre study and pedagogy can improve learners' rhetorical awareness which can turn into learners' ability to monitor and self-regulate their own learning in writing contexts (Negretti, 2012). In our study, integrating genre awareness with metacognitive strategies is seen as a key component of writing instruction to improve novice learners' reading and writing skills in EAP contexts.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Based on the previous theoretical perspective and empirical research, our research questions consist of the following:

##### **General research question:**

How does a genre-awareness approach to academic reading and writing with a focus on metacognition enhance students' critical reading and writing ability of argumentative genres in English?

##### **Specific research questions:**

- (1) In what ways does a genre-awareness approach with a focus on metacognitive knowledge enhance metacognitive genre awareness?
- (2) How does metacognitive genre awareness contribute to critical reading of argumentative genres in English?
- (3) How does metacognitive genre awareness contribute to writing argumentative genres in English?

## **1.5 Objectives of the study**

We have set three objectives for our study. The first one is to provide insights about the ways in which a genre-awareness approach with a focus on metacognition enhances metacognitive genre awareness in the L2. The second one is to explore the ways in which development of metacognitive genre awareness contributes to students' critical reading of argumentative genres in the L2. And the third one is to explore the ways in which development of metacognitive genre awareness contributes to students' writing of argumentative genres in the L2.

## **1.6 Outline of the dissertation**

*Chapter 1* provides an introduction to the study by specifying the background, research setting and context and a synopsis of the development of the field to. In addition, the objectives and research questions that guide the study are specified.

*Chapter 2* provides a review of the literature on genre-based theory and pedagogy by describing the three main approaches with the purpose of justifying and clarifying the theoretical approach adopted in the study. All of the three approaches are reviewed under the perspective of second language teaching and learning. We conclude the chapter with main contributions from each of these approaches to the present study and underline the potential of the North American New Rhetoric School to approach genre-awareness instruction in the EAP classroom.

*Chapter 3* provides a review of the literature on metacognitive genre awareness. It also discusses related concepts and key research on this notion. The chapter continues with a discussion on two pedagogical approaches relevant to the teaching of metacognitive genre awareness and proposes the critical genre awareness as an alternative approach to teach argumentative genres in academic settings. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the gap and need of further research on this notion and genre-based approaches in general.

*Chapter 4* describes the methodological approach undertaken in the study. It specifies the nature, research context, research design, data collection and data analyses. The research design includes



an overview of the course syllabus and genre-based structure used in the study to develop the pedagogical intervention. Finally, data collection includes the three stages established during the intervention: pre-test, in-test, and post-test. All of them include their own methods and techniques of data collection and analyses.

***Chapter 5*** reports the findings on the development of metacognitive genre awareness as a result of genre-based instruction and metacognition. Both theoretically and empirically, the notion of metacognitive knowledge was broken down into declarative, procedural and conditional awareness. At this stage, data collection and analyses were designed and conceived to capture metacognitive instances in these three categories. Therefore, results are presented on each of these components on the basis of reflective response matrices and reflective journals. Related findings are also provided on the emerging category of monitoring cognitive performance.

***Chapter 6*** presents the findings on the potential of metacognitive genre awareness to developing critical reading skills. Results are based on both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data consisted on critical reading excerpted on letters to the editor, cover letters/résumés and argumentative essays through the use of genre analysis papers. These results are then compared with findings on metacognitive genre awareness and quantitative data to account for triangulation and transfer of genre-based knowledge into critical reading skills.

***Chapter 7*** presents the findings on how metacognitive genre awareness contributes to academic writing skills. First, results are presented on the basis of qualitative data which consisted of composition of letters to the editor, cover letters/resumes and critical response papers. Results are also compared with findings on metacognitive genre awareness and quantitative data for triangulation purposes and transfer of genre-based knowledge into writing skills.

***Chapter 8*** discusses the main findings in the previous chapters and provides the conclusions of the study. It includes theoretical and educational implications as well as methodological contributions and limitations. The chapter finishes with concluding remarks.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Review of the Literature on Genre-based Theory and Pedagogy**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the theoretical underpinnings that characterize contemporary genre theory and analysis in relation to the development of genre awareness in EAP classrooms. First, the development of the notion of genre is introduced with relevant definitions and characterization of the concept. Second, due to the symbiotic and interactive nature of genre-based theory, the chapter provides a discussion of the three major approaches to genre analysis, the New Rhetoric School, the SFL (Social Functional Linguistics) school, known as The Sydney School, and the ESP. Then, the chapter focuses on main contributions and discussion of the New Rhetoric School on pedagogical issues and justifies its potential for EAP instruction.

#### **2.2 An Overview of the notion of genre**

Genre is an elusive term to define. In traditional rhetoric and literary studies, it refers to the classification of literary works that specifies the types of texts according to form or linguistic features e.g., poems, novels, or drama (Devitt, 2004, p. 4). This view, although helpful to analyze texts as comprised of textual patterns (form), does not help to understand genre as a dynamic and flexible construct.

Current views on the nature of discourse are moving towards comprehensive ways of understanding language and language use as mediated by broader social practices in reaction to traditional tendencies that understand genre as mere classification of texts. Classical literary theories of genre tend to enclose the notion into a “static” view that hinders one of the most important realizations of written communication today: the recognition that writing is embedded in situational contexts. In fact, Hyland (2004) states that current studies of genre stress a concern with context as well as form and emphasize the importance of description and analysis rather than simple classification (p. 1).

In contemporary genre theory and research, genre views have evolved from textually-oriented to contextually-grounded views (Bhatia, 2004). When viewed as contextually-grounded, genre involves not only the linguistic features, but also the socio-cognitive aspects of text interpretation, use and exploitation in relation to communicative goals (2004). In addition, Freedman and Medway (1994), from a New Rhetorical perspective, claim that the current notion of genre connects the regularities in discourse type (genre as classification) with broader social and cultural practices of language use. With the reconceptualization of genre as socially-situated, culture or community plays a central role in the production and processing of texts, especially in the communicative purposes or functions of texts, the roles of the participants, the formal text features and the use of content (Johns, 2003, p. 196). This perspective has expanded the notion of genre from classic literary works to the study of non-literary genres such as obituaries, newspapers, and accounts (Johns, 1997).

Current interpretations of genre then involve linguistic and contextual descriptions of language in use, an approach known as genre analysis. Genre analysis as applied in the language classroom will refer, in our study, to the critical understanding of features and rhetorical aspects of written communication as it occurs in repeated situations (see Devit, Reiff, & Bawarshi, 2004). This study advocates a view of genre that includes both function and form for genres are “constitutive both of literary and nonliterary (con) texts as well as of literary and nonliterary writers and readers” (Bawarshi, 2000, p. 336).

Another important concept in genre theory is genre knowledge. From a New Rhetorical perspective, Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) define it as “an individual’s repertoire of situationally appropriate responses to recurrent situations” (p. ix). We have moved to a socio-cognitive view which interprets genre as both cultural and cognitive. Genres as forms of ‘situated cognition’ are “derived from and embedded in our participation in communicative activities of daily and professional life” (1995, p.7). This definition is closely linked to procedural and background knowledge as recognized by Bawarshi and Reiff (2010). It follows that genre knowledge is constructed out of the relationships and experiences that individuals sustain in the production of texts within their communities and determine how effectively they communicate within them.

If genre is to be seen as ‘situated cognition’ or ‘socially approved acts’, we need to discuss the influence of schemata in building genre knowledge. In psycholinguistics, schemata

refer to the processing of information in an effort to impose conceptual order based on prior knowledge, patterns or beliefs (Huttner, 2007, p. 20). Applying schemata is fundamental in the theorization of how individuals construct and use genre knowledge based on their prior perceptions or experiences with genre practices and culture. Johns (1997) provides an insightful view of schemata akin to our understanding of genre. In her view, schemata include not only the prior experiences that readers and writers share regarding content and form, but also understanding of situations and the communities in which texts are written (p. 16). We consider schemata to be an integral part of the individuals' genre knowledge.

Considering the previous discussion, we can conclude that the notion of genre in contemporary theory and research is rather complex and multidimensional and this obviously has implications for writing instruction. Tardy (2006), for example, alludes to the complexity of genre by looking at it as a kind of *nexuses* among the textual, social and political dimensions of writing (p. 239). Devitt et al (2004) has taken this view into consideration to propose a genre-based approach to writing instruction by integrating analysis of the procedural, rhetorical, subject-matter and formal aspects of genre (more details will be given in further chapters).

By advocating a rhetorical perspective, the present study does not intend to undervalue the classical view of genre. Instead, it is our intention to embrace a theory that sees writing as integrated by both form and context (see Devitt, 2004; Jamieson & Campbell, 1982; Miller, 1984), or in a more general sense, a theory that involves both cognitive and social dimensions of second language learning (see Atkinson, 2002).

### **2.3 Genre-based approaches to the teaching of L2 writing**

In the last decade the notion of genre and its applications have received considerable attention in language teaching and learning, particularly in second language writing instruction (Hyland, 2007). Genre-based teaching is “concerned with what learners do when they write” (2007, p. 5). Under this view, writing instruction is organized around the texts that students will have to write in their occupational, academic or social contexts and the skills they need to develop to participate effectively in those contexts (2007).

Hyland (2004) summarizes the advantages of genre-based pedagogies to writing instruction. First, they are explicit since they help to specify how texts are structured and how

language functions in particular contexts. Second, they are systematic because they provide a framework for focusing on language and context. Third, they are supportive because they give teachers a central role in scaffolding student learning and creativity. Next, they are critical because they provide the resources for students to understand and challenge valued discourse, and finally, they are consciousness raising since they increase teachers' awareness of texts in relationship to students' writing.

Three main approaches to Genre-based Writing Instruction (GBWI) have been identified in the literature (see Johns, 2011) represented by each of the traditions described earlier. These approaches differ, but also overlap in several important ways. Because of the symbiotic relationship between them, this section first provides a theoretical review of each approach. Then, each school is analyzed in terms of the most important contributions to the present study and their own limitations. Since we focus on the New Rhetoric School, whose main criticism is its limited orientation to pedagogy, we have included a discussion on the implicit/explicit genre instruction dichotomy and justified the potential of this approach to teaching academic writing. Although we claim that this approach can be used to enhance novice learners' academic skills, we recognize that integrating SFL and ESP successful practices and principles can make GBWI more effective than using them separately.

### **2.3.1 The Australian Sydney School**

The Australian Sydney School is based upon the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) model proposed by M.A.K. Halliday (1978). Hallidayan views on language suggest that language learning emerges out of the social relationships individuals build in their fulfillment of pragmatic functions (1978, p. 16). Genre within this school is understood as a "staged goal-oriented social process" (Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987). SFL practitioners present the most sophisticated and articulated pedagogy based on the teaching of regularities of key language features such as field (the activity), tenor (relationships between participants) and mode (channel of communication) that together determine the register of language (Hyon, 1996) or context of situation (Devitt, 2004).

This tradition has as its major target Australian primary/secondary schools and adult immigrant learners of English, all of them considered novice students. An important goal is to

make students understand how language form and generic text structure facilitate the transmission of information and meaning in the process of interacting with others (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). In classroom practice, genre is operationalized in the assistance given to students to master highly valued genres (elemental genres) such as narratives, recounts, arguments and expositions which combine to form more complex macro-genres encountered in everyday life (Hyland, 2007). Some of the strengths of this school are the connection of language, function, content and context; the interest in novice writers, particularly those in second/foreign contexts, the teaching of elemental genres as related to central purposes and social contexts, and a clear pedagogy based on the teaching-learning cycle (Johns, 2008, p. 245).

According to our view, a major criticism to this framework is that it situates the text form as a condition to students' academic success. In fact, Johns (2008) warns about the SFL instructional framework's tendency to emphasize genre acquisition or 'reproduction of text types' often from templates organized in predictable ways (p. 238). The present study does not intend to foster genre acquisition for the sake of reproduction of text types. We maintain that given the characterization of genre and its interdependence with recurring situations, novice writers need to develop genre awareness to cope with the demands of a variety of writing tasks. Despite its focus on genre acquisition, Halliday's theory on social semiotic is clearly a foundational theory relevant to our current understanding of "genres as integral to social contexts" (see Johns, 1997, p. 15), a concept akin to that of the New Rhetoric School.

### **2.3.2 The ESP (English for Specific Purposes) Approach**

The ESP approach draws mostly on research developed by Swales (Hyland, 2007). Swales' main contribution to the understanding, and therefore, practice of genre analysis lies in his claim that texts are conventionally divided into elements that serve communicative purposes for both the writer and the community (Johns, 2003, p. 205). ESP scholars explain genres as "the purposive actions routinely used by community members to achieve a particular purpose" (Hyland, 2007, p. 154). According to this, genres are seen in terms of the groups that use them and their specific practices (2007). The target groups of this school are non-native speakers of English pursuing academic studies or professionals from specialized fields. Pedagogical applications in this school focus on the study of representative samples of texts to identify the series of moves that show

how sections of the text serve specific communicative functions, which in combination fulfill the communicative purpose of the entire genre (Hüttner, 2007).

Clearly, ESP practitioners are more linguistically and textually oriented than New Rhetoricians (Flowerdew, 2002), frequently beginning their pedagogical work by analyzing the language and structure of texts (functional moves) instead of analyzing the context (Johns, 2008, p. 243). Generally, ESP genre-based applications aim at helping non-native speakers of English become acquainted with the functions and linguistic conventions of texts that they need to read and write in their disciplines or professions (Bhatia, 1993; Flowerdew, 1993; Swales, 1990). Their concern with lexico-grammatical features and functional purposes of texts makes ESP closely related to the Australian Sydney School, for this reason they have been identified as 'linguistic approaches' (Flowerdew, 2002). Linguistic approaches, Hyland affirms, provide practical orientations for teaching purposes because they can reveal textual and rhetorical features in relation to the purpose of the genre (2007, p.154). In recent discussions, however, Flowerdew (2011) has modified his classification considerably and suggested that ESP and New Rhetoric may be concurring more than ever before.

ESP genre studies focus on EAP (English for Academic Purposes) classrooms whose major goal is to teach students how to control 'the organization and stylistic features of texts' (Hyon, 1996, p. 198). We recognize the importance of analyzing linguistic features in EAP classrooms, yet we claim that developing a critical understanding of genre and rhetorical contexts should be an integral part of genre-based instruction. This is fundamental if we intend to prepare mature and critical readers and writers. Specifically, EFL writers need to recognize that genres are constituted by form and function and they do not and cannot exist independently from a context or socio-historical event. This is why contextual analysis is proposed as the starting point of writing instruction.

Swales has recognized the value of genres in academic settings by interpreting them as meaningful frames for academic schema-based sets of knowledge, which he maintains, is a fundamental ability to function successfully in academic contexts (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). In this way, learners build their knowledge of genre by learning from the conventions that have been approved in a particular discourse community. ESP is considered a learner-centered approach characterized by its responsiveness to the learners' target academic and occupational needs (Belcher, 2004) and often translated into curriculum design and materials development

(Swales, 1990). It can be inferred that from an ESP perspective, learners need to acquire the conventions of the discourse community and use them appropriately to achieve the intended rhetorical purposes. This view has generated a great deal of controversy because it has been understood as being passive to the status quo or “accommodationist” to language learning (Benesh, 1993).

The view that ESP enhances an “accommodationist” view to language curricula has been a point of debate in this school. Belcher (2004), however, refutes this position and claims that the value of ESP is precisely its student-centered approach directed to meet students’ language needs in their academic and occupational contexts. Even more, ESP approaches’ main goal is intended to help both native and non-native speakers to develop academic communicative competence (Swales, 1990, p. 9). This goal, in contrast to New Rhetorical views, may be interpreted as genre acquisition rather than genre awareness. Currently, however, ESP pedagogy is becoming more akin to contextual approaches than ever before. It has increased its attention to social situatedness (Belcher, 2004), intertextuality of genres (Swales, 2004) and is moving towards contextual views to genre-based learning which are grounded on genre awareness rather than genre acquisition (see Johns, 1987, 2011).

### **2.3.3 The North America New Rhetoric School**

This school draws on rhetorical theory and composition studies from the perspective of L1 (Johns, 2003), but it has also been enriched by other areas such as activity theory, post-structuralist literacy theory (Bhaktinian dialogism), social constructionism and applied linguistics, and critical discourse analysis (Russell, 1997). Miller’s reconceptualization of genre as “typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations” (1984, p. 159) embodies genre as social actions that occur within particular situations and social contexts. Writing from this perspective is situated in broader contexts, both as process and product, and bound to the relationships that people establish in the accomplishment of rhetorical purposes.

The new conceptualization that “genres respond appropriately to their rhetorical situations” constitutes the basis of contemporary rhetoric genre theory (Devitt, 2004, p. 16). The implications of this notion for classroom applications are complex, but insightful. It suggests new ways to connect writing to broader communicative contexts as defined by the roles of the



reader and writer, their purposes, themes and language choices; this concept is known as rhetorical situation. Context of situation then becomes a central category of analysis in current interpretations of genre. Devitt explains this concept as follows:

Connecting genres to situations provides genre with an essentially rhetorical nature. It helps explain how language users know to take particular reader and writer roles, how they select a particular genre when they have a particular purpose, and why certain genres are most commonly used within particular groups (2004, p. 16).

Hence, from a social perspective writer's choices are always context-dependent, determined by variations in the social activity, the relationship between reader-writer and the constraints imposed by the situations (see Hyland, 2008). In fact, New Rhetoricians such as Coe (2002), have proposed an understanding of genre in which functional relationships of text types and rhetorical situations are interconnected. According to this, both analysis of lexico-grammatical features and rhetorical aspects of texts should be integrated in writing instruction. In this way students and teachers become aware of the interrelationships between genres and the situations to which they respond.

Research in the New Rhetoric School is directed towards the ideological, social and physical surroundings in which genres are produced, but also to the study of the ways in which genres evolve, are negotiated and decay (Johns, 2003, p. 209). The view that genres are dynamic (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995) or "changeable, flexible, and plastic" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 63) becomes central to New Rhetoric concerns. Consequently, New Rhetoricians begin with the analysis of the context when approaching genre study instead of starting with analysis of formal features of texts for they are only considered after the rhetorical situation has been analyzed (Johns, 2008). This analysis should lead the student to make connections between the genre and the rhetorical demands in an attempt to connect function and form.

Most New Rhetoricians hold that genre knowledge is tacit and is ideally acquired through immersion instead of explanation of genre features (Freedman, 1994). Therefore, explicit genre instruction is seen as artificial which removes tasks, texts, and text processing from their authentic rhetorical contexts (Johns, 1995). This can be a limitation to this school. However, some New Rhetoricians have recognized the importance of explicit genre-based instruction and

have designed curricula and teaching proposals. Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi (2004), for example, have proposed a critical awareness approach for academic readers and writers which has informed the present study. Some other researchers interested in pedagogical applications of genre within this school are Adam and Artemeva (2002), Coe (2002), and Beaufort (2007). In agreement with these researchers and practitioners, we advocate explicit teaching and claim that it is beneficial for genre-based learning (see section 2.5.3.1 for further details), especially in novice readers and writers.

## **2.4 Common ground on genre theory and analysis**

We find that given the multiple views on genre study and interpretation, it is necessary to review and summarize the common points on which each of the main approaches agree. Bhatia (2004) establishes two central points as common to generic description. The first one is the emphasis on conventions and the second one on creativity. They both reveal again the complex nature of genre. On the one hand, generic conventions situate genre as a stabilized construct that helps members of a discourse community respond to rhetorical situations in appropriate or socially “expected ways”, even though as Bhatia explains, “rhetorical contexts do not always recur exactly” (p. 24). On the other hand, proclivity to genre variation and change provides expert members of the community with strategies to respond to rhetorical situations in different ways by creating new generic forms that fulfill private intentions, yet within recognizable communicative purposes (2004). Advocating this dynamic nature of genres, Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) declare that genres are “sites of contention between stability and change” (p. 6).

Another common agreement is that writing is *dialogic* (Bakhtin, 1986). It entails an ongoing interaction between the writer and the reader, in other words, individuals make meaning in response to others’ writing (and their own), which in turn provokes responsive actions. The notion of dialogism is fundamental to understand the implications of building a sense of audience in writing process(es) in relation to intertextuality (see Bahktin, 1986). Intertextuality refers to how discourse (and genres) relate to other discourses (and genres), and how they change and vary over time or at any particular point in time (Hyland, 2002, p. 36). By linking genres to previous ones, text-users create networks of prior texts in the construction or interpretation of genres based on previous experiences and shared genre knowledge.

Johns (2003) summarizes some principles common to all interpretations of genre. Some of them are (1) Texts are socially constructed; (2) Texts are purposeful and their functions are determined by conventions; (3) textual conventions are often determined by community constraints which have to be considered by the writer at the moment of writing, e.g., form, layout, structure, etc.; (4) genres are ideologically driven, and (5) language of texts should never be taught apart from rhetorical considerations (pp. 12-13). We find these principles useful for revising writing theories and applications that can guide genre-based writing instruction in successful ways.

## **2.5 Main contributions from genre-based pedagogies to the study**

This section deals with the most important contributions of the three major genre-based pedagogies to the present study. There will be a discussion of main contributions from each of the schools with a particular emphasis on the contributions of the New Rhetoric School to academic writing.

### **2.5.1 Main contributions from the Australian Sydney School**

From SFL pedagogy, we have extracted three principles. The first one is the realization that language, functional purpose and context interact in important ways in the form of genres (and registers) and that genres are also connected to academic content, that is, learning information (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). A second principle is the idea that novice writers, particularly ESL/EFL learners, can benefit from explicit instruction of genre due to their disadvantage with reference to the lack of socialization of school-relevant forms of communication (genres) (Martin, 1989). Last, but not least, we consider the principle of supporting learning (see Vygotsky, 1978) to be enlightening, particularly when directing genre-based writing instruction to novice learners. Supporting learning or scaffolding enhances systematic support for writing development through the notions of shared consciousness and borrowed consciousness (Hyland, 2007, p. 158). Shared consciousness is based on the idea that learners when working together learn more effectively, whereas borrowed consciousness refers to how learners when working with more knowledgeable peers develop a better understanding of tasks and ideas (p. 158).

### **2.5.2 Main contributions from the ESP approach**

Genre-based research and pedagogy from the perspective of ESP has focused on EAP contexts (Hyon, 1996) to a greater extent than other strands of research. It provides a framework to understand how EAP settings and instruction should function in regard to genre-based learning. Hyland posits a great deal of attention to the role genres play in the demands of academic situations and the conventions of academic contexts that students face in higher education today (2006).

ESP pedagogies recognize the interconnection among language, texts and discourse communities to approach genre analysis. We find this principle to be useful for genre-based instruction because it underlines Swales' connection of genre with purposes and discourse communities, and more specifically, to disciplinary-based literacies (Hyland, 2006a). Although most of these applications have been quite useful for genre-based instruction, they have been mostly used with graduate learners or highly specialized learners in specific disciplinary fields. Therefore, it becomes necessary to explore how such applications impact on novice learners.

Two concepts emerge from ESP studies with strong implications for genre-based instruction in academic contexts: culture and discourse community. Culture, a difficult term to define, is an influential factor in academic contexts because it shapes the way students are expected to write and speak in the academy (Hyland, 2006). Shared genre knowledge is obtained when individuals gain experience and knowledge at using and responding with genres, which gradually turn into natural ways of communicating in particular settings (Johns, 1987). This knowledge is commonly associated to the notion of schema which has been discussed earlier in the chapter. Knowledge of cultural contexts has been found to be an essential aspect of genre knowledge for it involves the writers' background on what the beliefs, values and goals of potential readers are in order to make the necessary adaptations. Altogether, culture shapes the way writers and readers react to and respond in the creation of meaning within their communities since understanding of texts is always developing and evolving (Hyland, 2004).

Discourse community, another central yet controversial notion, refers to the way language is used to communicate with other members of the social groups in which the individual participates, their norms, categorizations, conventions and modes of inquiry (Hyland, 2006). Swales' (1990) definition of discourse community integrates shared common goals, the

ownership of particular genres, mechanisms for communication, specialized lexis and knowledge of context as well as discourse expertise. This definition stresses ownership of genres and discourse conventions that enable members of a community to maintain their goals, regulate their membership and communicate effectively with each other (Johns, 1997, p. 51). Such interpretation of discourse community has been influential in determining the goals of ESP courses which are commonly based on the students' specific language and academic needs.

Swales' view of discourse community, however, has been critiqued as deterministic and static since it does not capture the interactive nature of social groups (Devitt, 2004, p. 34). Individuals, for example, can move back and forth from one community to another and this dynamics entails different types of genre knowledge. Despite the controversy, the contribution of this notion to genre theory has been influential. Together with the purpose of the text, this concept has become a distinguishable variable in genre-based pedagogy (see Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011).

For our own purposes, we have adopted communities of practice as the term that refers to the practices and values over language and effective control of communication (see Johns, 1997). It is our view that L2 learners are members of academic communities with the potential to become members of specialized or disciplinary communities provided that they are given opportunities to develop theories of genres that help them to make appropriate rhetorical and linguistic choices in the production of texts.

EAP genre-based pedagogy contributes to the present study in several ways. First, it shows the relationship of genre to discourse communities or social groups in a wider sense, providing a better understanding of how members gain acceptance within their communities through the acquisition of language conventions and use of valued genres. It becomes crucial then, as Hyland posits, to help novice learners to engage in "acceptable ways with readers through a variety of rhetorical choices" (2010, p. 173). Second, ESP approaches have recognized the value of moving towards contextual ways of teaching and learning writing which incorporates both knowledge of the textual forms and social functions of it (Belcher, 2004). Finally, ESP approaches have also contributed to genre-based pedagogy by providing ways to link up language learning to learners' disciplines and professional fields (Cheng, 2006).

### 2.5.3 Main contributions from New Rhetoric School

New Rhetoric researchers have been less concerned with teaching applications because of their particular interest in helping university students and novice professionals to understand the social functions or actions of genres and the contexts in which they are used (Hyon, 1996, p. 698). Despite its limited impact in genre-based instruction, we argue that New Rhetoricians have contributed to approaching writing instruction from a genre-based perspective in insightful ways. The theorization of genre from the New Rhetoric perspective differs from SFL and ESP in its focus on the dynamic quality of genres which has, to a great extent, permeated their research and views on explicit teaching. Main research has been devoted to trace the evolution of specific genres in response to socio-cultural phenomena in their contexts (Freedman & Medway, 1994). The dynamic and flexible conceptions of genre in this school depart from traditional conceptions such as that of the Sydney School which, according to Freedman & Medway, have affected the teaching implications and applications in North America writing instruction (1994, p. 10). As a result, the status of explicit instruction in this school has become a contested issue.

The main criticism against explicit genre-based instruction stems from Freedman's (1993) strong and restricted hypotheses. The strong hypothesis states that explicit teaching is neither necessary nor useful and it can even be harmful if instructors have an inaccurate and incomplete knowledge of genres. The restricted hypothesis, on the other hand, implies that under certain conditions, teaching may facilitate learning (p. 226). Freedman's argument mainly states that teaching genres out of the contexts in which they occur is artificial, and therefore, not possible. Genre knowledge, she further claims, is tacit and can only be acquired through immersion (1993).

Freedman's argument against explicit genre-based pedagogies has also been refuted both theoretically and pedagogically. We would like to take on Fanestock's (1993) article "Genre and the Rhetorical Craft." Fanestock refutes Freedman's idea that writers' intuitive knowledge emerges at college level by claiming that this knowledge can only be a result of previous stages of practice. It is not possible, she states, that learners do recognize regularities in texts if they are not expected to find them or at least do not understand what count as a significant regularity (p. 270). Fanestock's argument seems to allude to the intrinsic dichotomy between explicit teaching and implicit learning, very much debated in applied linguistics (see N.C. Ellis, 1994 for a full

discussion on this topic). We will not deal with a full discussion on this topic since this is beyond the scope of our study.

Although Freedman's acknowledges that immersion in authentic contexts contributes to genre awareness leading then to acquisition of genre features (see Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010), we would like to recognize the value that Fanestock posits on practice or previous experience as a pre-requisite for developing implicit learning. After all, as Hyland (2007) asserts, L2 writers are at considerable disadvantage in accessing authentic contexts; therefore, genre-teaching can help to bridge the gap between situated learning and classroom work (p. 151). Further research has been suggested in the literature though to clarify the debate between explicit teaching and implicit learning (see also Williams & Colomb, 1993).

Even though explicit instruction remains a contested topic within North America New Rhetoric School, New Rhetoricians have made significant contributions to genre-based pedagogies. First, New Rhetoric research has brought important insights on writing transfer and the value of metacognitive reflection to enhance "high-road" learning (Beaufort, 2007; Bazerman, 2009). Other researchers, Adam & Artemeva (2002), have developed research in L1 writing pedagogy with implications in EAP classroom. They reported learning benefits as well as successful mastery of academic genres that result from enculturation into a discourse community. Coe (2002), another well-known New Rhetoric researcher, highlights applications that help students to focus on writing as heuristics, approaching it as problem/solution, evaluating rhetorical situations, analyzing audiences, and writing for complex and diverse readerships. Most of these research contributions and applications are geared towards an understanding of the situatedness of genre by analyzing the immediate context, the purposes, the generic structures, the audience's expectations, and appropriateness of content and language forms.

Hyon (1996), states that New Rhetoric scholarship provides ESL teachers with rich perspectives on the social actions that genres perform across communities and the values and beliefs of such communities. Translated in classroom activities, these insights help students to recognize the purposes of genres in their own disciplines and professions and the relationships between those functions and the larger goals of the communities (p. 713). Bawarshi's (2006) research has also shown the benefits of raising students' awareness of the situation in which

writing is to take place and the immediate demands by helping students shift from an internal cognitive process of invention to a situated cognitive process located in the genres (p. 244).

Most importantly, New Rhetoricians like Reiff, Bawarshi and Devitt (2004), have not only contributed to genre applications but also to genre curricula. Their book *Scenes of writing: Strategies for composition with genres*, which has been used in the implementation of our pedagogical framework, is an example of such contributions. These scholars and researchers have proposed a genre-awareness approach to second language writing that links writing to social contexts. According to this approach, students are expected to be able to make critically informed and effective writing decisions when approaching their writing tasks (p. xvii) (More details will be given about the pedagogical approach in the next chapter).

Johns has recognized the value of New Rhetoric applications to academic contexts, especially the one regarding 'high road' transfer of learning or the ability to apply old knowledge to new contexts or situations (2011, p. 61). This type of learning suggests a focus on genre awareness that provides students the strategies to approach a new rhetorical problem as a completely new and different situation from previous ones (see Beaufort, 2007). In this sense, New Rhetoric pedagogies are oriented to encourage learners to see genres as socially situated and culturally embedded constructs (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010).

There are, however, some issues that need to be resolved about New Rhetoric Pedagogies. Tardy (2011) has acknowledged that such an approach can be challenging to novice readers and writers for genre can be seen as too abstract. This can be a disadvantage, although we consider that scaffolding can contribute to minimize possible challenges that learners may encounter in the learning process. Another issue is that contextual approaches such as the New Rhetoric one, takes the analysis of context as the initial step of genre-based instruction, which remains a contested issue in the field. In an attempt to bring insights on curricula contested issues, Johns (2011) suggests that instruction should start by analyzing texts and their structures instead, especially among novice learners, and then move towards more contextual-based analysis. We argue that more research is to be done on this issue and sustain that the present study can bring some insights in this direction.



## 2.6 Summary

The several, yet overlapping theoretical frameworks existing in genre theory and research have influenced genre-based pedagogies to varying degrees. Despite different and multiple stands, each of the genre-approaches discussed here takes these principles to different levels of interpretation and practice. Whatever view is taken to writing instruction, genre should be seen as a powerful tool for teaching academic writing as it provides an understanding of the conventions of language use (Hyland, 2008) and the possibilities for language variation if enhanced in the classroom. In traditional approaches learning models of genres may be interpreted as genre acquisition—the mechanical training of students in acquiring multiple genres. We rather recognize the value of genre awareness and metacognition to enrich learners' critical understanding of academic communication and minimize blind reproduction of genres. This orientation to genre analysis, although highly contextual, does not preclude linguistic analysis or attention to form since genre analysis encompasses both context and text. Even though the New Rhetoric School has been the least pedagogically-oriented approach to genre analysis, we argue that it provides insightful principles and applications that can be beneficial to further L2 learners' academic writing skills. However, more research is to be done on how it benefits novice readers and writers and, overall, whether they really enhance transferability of learning as it is expected in current genre-based learning and teaching.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Review of the Literature on Genre Awareness and Metacognition**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the most important theoretical and pedagogical issues concerning metacognitive genre awareness in EAP writing instruction. It provides key definitions of the concept based on two prominent genre scholars: Johns (1997, 2008) and Devitt (2004), who have also proposed alternative curricula on genre awareness. Second, the integration of genre awareness and metacognitive theory, conceptualized as metacognitive genre awareness, is discussed as the core concept of our genre-awareness approach. Next, the chapter outlines the pedagogical framework on critical genre-awareness adopted in the study, and finally, the chapter describes how our approach on metacognitive genre awareness can assist L2 learners in developing academic argumentative skills in English.

#### **3.2 Metacognition and writing**

According to cognitive psychologists, metacognition is a difficult term to define due to inconsistencies and variation in interpretations and conceptualizations of the term (see Schunk, 2008; Veenman, Van Hout-Wolters, & Afflerbach, 2006). Flavell (1979) first interpreted metacognition as the knowledge and cognition of cognitive enterprises that regulate learning (p. 906). He differentiates it from other cognitive enterprises because of its *monitoring or self-regulatory nature* (1987), a view also supported by Schraw (1998). Brown (1987), however, roughly defines it as the knowledge of the self and control of one's cognitive system (p. 66). She acknowledges the importance of metacognitive entities in the learning process and change, particularly in activities that have been associated with metacognitive thinking such as reading and studying (1987). Metacognition has been closely connected to self-regulated learning and particularly bounded to academic settings (Kaplan, 2008). It has also been found to be a key aspect for successful learning (Kuhn, 2000).

In the last decade, there has been increasing interest in inquiring about the role of metacognition in writing (Sitko, 1998). Metacognitive research in writing has, for the most part, originated in cognitive psychology and has been expanded to educational fields, including second and/or foreign language instruction. There seems to be a consensus among cognitive psychologists and researchers that writing is a potentially complex and resource demanding activity (Torrance & Jeffery, 1999). From this point of view, it has been found that even experienced writers are generally at risk of overloading cognitive resources when confronted with a writing task. Writers are faced with sub-components that demand cognitive resources along the way which have to be efficiently managed if a coherent and well-structured text is to be produced (Fayol, 1999). Thus, writing understood in this way requires a great deal of metacognitive awareness to handle the constraints imposed by the activity on the limited cognitive resources available to the individual (Flower & Hayes, 1980; Torrance & Jeffery, 1999; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

In this line, Flower and Hayes proposed a model for writing in an attempt to account for the cognitive processes and constraints writers go through while composing (1981). In their model, three elements are highlighted: the task environment, the writer's long term memory, and the writing processes (1981, p. 369). This model provides two meaningful concepts to our study: the monitor box and the rhetorical problem. Monitoring is in charge of helping the writer to make choices about their current processes and progress (p. 375). Since writing processes identified as planning, translating and revising are recursive, writers are expected to use their repertoire of strategies to move from one stage to another efficiently. The rhetorical problem, attributed to the task environment, refers to the writer's analysis of the rhetorical situation and the audience to make decisions about the text. Obtaining an accurate representation of the rhetorical problem determines the writer's effectiveness to a great extent as it also influences how the writer builds his/her own goals and intentions. As a result, Flower and Hayes' recognition that the writing act requires monitoring of the writing process and understanding of the rhetorical problem suggests metacognition.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) have also provided insights into the development of metacognitive strategies applied to writing skills by focusing on the development of rhetorical and self-regulatory strategies. Rhetorical strategies are intended to achieve particular purposes in composition whereas self-regulatory strategies help the writer to control their cognitive behavior

during writing (1987). Both types of strategies enhance mature stages of writing like setting goals, monitoring progress towards those goals, managing and solving problems (p. 250). They distinguish between mature and immature writers and interpret writing as a problem-solving activity that requires high-level thinking skills. This process has been conceptualized as knowledge-transformation and is particularly endowed to mature writers. Conversely, low-level processing which is commonly attributed to immature writers is known as knowledge-telling. Knowledge telling represents the stages of writing with the lower levels of problem solving skills and creative thinking. Thus, they are known as the sort of strategies that are readily available to the writer which are automatically transferred into the writing task with the least transformation possible of intellectual knowledge and thinking. It can be said that most L2 learners in our TEFL program are characterized by this level of processing.

The underlying assumption behind Bereiter and Scardamalia's framework is that complex problem solving skills can lead to better understanding through writing and ultimately better quality of text production. In fact, mature writers are thought to be more skillful than immature writers at planning their writing task(s) because they consider rhetorical elements and genre conventions to better shape their writing (1987). Although these assumptions have been critiqued (see Baaijen, 2012), they have opened up new ways of thinking about writing as a cognitive activity that requires learners' metacognitive ability. Bereiter and Scardamalia's fundamental premise is that novice learners can be assisted in moving from knowledge-telling to knowledge-transformation by reducing cognitive demands on the writing task through the use of simplified routines when writing texts (1987).

Within genre-based theory and research, New Rhetoricians have conducted conscientious research to suggest ways for learners to transfer their knowledge to new contexts and have proposed genre-based applications that focus on "high road" transfer of genre knowledge instead of "low road" transfer (see Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). These applications have led to increasing attention to methods for situating learning and fostering meta-cognition that connects new and already-acquired knowledge (2010, p. 175). Beaufort, for example, proposes genre awareness as a curriculum model to enhance students' transfer of knowledge to new writing situations (2007). It results that transferability of knowledge to other contexts of situation becomes the goal for a genre-awareness classroom. In this view, metacognition has been recognized as a required step

for learners to develop the necessary flexibility to approach writing tasks as rhetorical problems. Our study is in line with this view.

### **3.3 Genre awareness in EAP contexts**

Throughout our discussion, it has been highlighted that novice academic writers need to learn valued genres in meaningful ways and from a critical point of view. Not only do L2 learners need linguistic competence, but also socio-rhetorical knowledge to understand writing as a social activity embedded in the culture and dynamics of particular communities of practice. This view implies that students should be initiated into a process of enculturation (which is common to most genre-based theory and pedagogy) with a particular stress on critical awareness to prepare learners for rhetorical flexibility rather than just genre acquisition. Moreover, it has been justified that genre awareness should be the focus of academic writing instruction because of its potential to assist students in their understanding of writing as a dynamic, complex and situated activity. Devitt, (2004) has gone beyond the notion of genre awareness and included the component of critical awareness to initiate learners into the possibilities of critiquing, challenging and even resisting potential ideological effects of genres.

#### **3.3.1 Conceptualization of genre awareness**

We have relied on John's (2008) and Devitt's (2004) views on genre awareness. Johns (2008) from the ESP/EAP perspective, defines genre awareness as the "assistance given to students in developing the rhetorical flexibility necessary for adapting their socio-cognitive genre knowledge to ever-evolving contexts" (2008, p. 238). This definition recognizes genres as evolving and dynamic rather than fixed formats to be memorized and copied by learners. According to Johns, genre awareness allows novice writers to "assess, adapt and/or negotiate a genre to a situation" (p. 238). In a few words, learners need to learn how genres respond to situations appropriately, how they can change or vary within a given situation, or how they use a given genre depending on the purpose they need to fulfill. Such knowledge is thought to facilitate communicative competence and transferability of learning to a variety of contexts in the real world. This definition is akin to New Rhetorical views of genre.

Devitt (2004), from the New Rhetoric School, urges the teaching of genre awareness as the “critical consciousness of both rhetorical purposes and ideological effects of generic forms” (p. 192). This conceptualization focuses on the application of a critical awareness pedagogy that enables the novice writer to learn newly encountered genres by focusing not only on rhetorical understanding, but also on critical consciousness of how genres operate in social contexts. Devitt stresses genres as constraint and choice that lead students to an understanding of genre as form (constraint), but also as open to individual creativity and expression (choice). Taken these definitions into account, we have formulated genre awareness as the ability to respond to rhetorical problems by taking into account conventional knowledge of genre and the possibilities for genre variation and change.

### **3.3.2 Key theoretical perspectives on genre awareness in EAP contexts**

#### **3.3.2.1 Socioliterate views to genre awareness**

Johns has proposed a genre awareness-raising theory and practice beneficial to novice writers in ESL/EFL contexts that concurs in several ways with the critical genre-awareness approach we have adopted. She proposes an integrative socioliterate view and pedagogy to genre-based instruction in academic contexts (1997). One of her premises is that texts are primarily socially constructed and therefore community and culture influence the way they are written and read (1997). This pedagogy encourages instructors to see literacy classrooms as sites for genre-based inquiry in which students research texts, contexts and roles and develop an awareness and critique of communities and textual practices (1997, p. 19). In this process of critical enquiry and engagement in multi-modal genre-based practices and situations, students are usually engaged in revision and reflection of their genre knowledge to develop a richer understanding of texts (p. 21).

In the classroom, there is a strong reliance on ethnographic methodology to help students become researchers of texts and genres (p. 92). For example, students are engaged in interviews with discipline-specific faculty, disciplinary practices interviews, pedagogical artifacts (text-based) interviews, participant observation, and literacy journals to enhance research skills (pp. 105-109). In general, Johns’ pedagogy encourages students’ development of awareness of the

complexities of text production as well as strategies to assess literacy practices in the view that academic literacies and genre theories evolve and change over time (p. 130).

Johns has proposed two curriculum possibilities for genre awareness: Interdisciplinary learning communities and disciplinary grouping of literacy responses into ‘macro-genres’ (2008). The former assists novice learners researching values, topics, genres and assessment of a single academic or content-based course through ethnographic methods (e.g., interviews) and help students produce their own texts based on their genre analysis and contextualized findings. The latter uses Carter’s disciplinary macro-genres (2007) that categorize genres in a series of responses. This taxonomy is used as a framework for teaching genre awareness to academic novices. By using the taxonomy, Johns provides a series of guidelines to assist students in their understanding of genre tasks, analysis and discussion of a variety of disciplinary texts, writing responses to genres, and practices to becoming academic researchers.

Even though these instructional approaches have great advantages for novice students, we have relied on the critical genre awareness approach for several reasons. First, it seems to complement very well with our view that genre-based learning requires the development of strategies to analyze rhetorical and textual features to higher levels. Second, it provides a systematic way to approach writing instruction in academic environments that start with the observation and analysis of scenes (writing situations), continuing with the analysis of the situation (topic, purpose, setting, and participants), moving to the analysis of patterns (textual features), to finally lead the students to draw conclusions about the genre. Finally, it provides a clear framework to approach genres as ideologically and culturally embedded constructs that in our view enhances critical awareness of genre as well. All of these reasons require that learners develop metacognitive awareness to a higher extent, hence the approach complements rather well with the metacognitive framework adopted in the study.

### **3.3.2.2 Critical genre awareness pedagogy**

Critical genre awareness is an approach to genre learning proposed by Devitt (2004, 2009), and Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi (2004) that stems from current views on contemporary rhetorical theory. This theoretical approach mainly draws on Miller’s views on genre as social action (1984). The critical genre awareness approach intends to make students “understand the intricate

connections between contexts and forms, to perceive potential ideological effects of genres, and to discern both constraints and choices that genres make possible” (Devitt, 2004, p. 198). It highlights the process of learning new genres rather than the acquisition of particular linguistic features of genres. Therefore, genres are seen as learning strategies that enhance students’ consciousness-raising of rhetorical features and contexts (Devitt, 2004).

We find that linking genres to learning strategies is relevant to our pedagogical framework as it provides the context to engage students in metacognitive thinking. Students apply strategies to “contexts in which they encounter genres—in other words, in any context in which they encounter language” (2004, p. 198). Central to this approach is the idea that teaching genre awareness can be beneficial for transferring general rhetorical understanding to other particular rhetorical tasks (p. 202). When students learn new genres those can help as resources or antecedent genres to approach new tasks, a potential link between genre knowledge and genre performance. However, there is still a need to research how or in what ways this genre awareness can help learners to transfer knowledge to other contexts and be able to ultimately make decisions that positively influence their academic skills.

The critical approach to genre awareness highlights the need to shift away from assimilationist pedagogies to GBWI (Genre-based Writing Instruction). To avoid following genres as prescriptive models or privileged forms of discourse, instructors need to be critical at using genres for explicit instruction by making an effort to enhance students’ critical awareness (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). After all, as Devitt claims “the first and most important genre pedagogy... is the teacher’s genre awareness” (2009, p. 339). Critical awareness starts rather early in this approach as part of the genre analysis that learners apply to all genres studied in class. They are specifically given strategies to analyze how or what rhetorical and textual patterns tell us about the contexts of situation or the relationships users establish in those contexts.

In this approach, context and form are interwoven. Students compare and contrast familiar genres with new ones to discover the rhetorical purposes served by specific generic forms. By analyzing the situations in which genres appear, students can see how forms suit the context of situations. Eventually, students are taken to higher degrees of analysis by making connections with values, patterns and beliefs that are reflected in the genres as an influence of culture and other contexts of genres (see intertextuality in previous chapter).



The approach consists of the following steps which have been adapted to the present study:

- (1) Observing and describing the scene of writing
- (2) Using genres to read scenes of writing
  - a. Collecting samples of a genre
  - b. Identifying the scene and describing the rhetorical situation
  - c. Identifying and analyzing rhetorical and linguistic patterns in the genre
  - d. Interpreting those patterns to determine the social and ideological dimensions of the genre in use
- (3) Getting into the writing processes
  - a. Planning or inventing
  - b. Drafting
  - c. Revising
  - d. Presenting
- (4) Critiquing and changing genres
- (5) Reflecting on the writing task/processes

(Adapted from Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi, 2004)

Genre analysis is located at the heart of the learning process and is described as a “close and critical reading of people’s patterns of communication in different situations within scenes” (p. 63). In order to perform critical reading of academic texts, students are provided with specific guidelines and strategies specified by the approach. Students are first asked to collect samples of a genre and then they analyze the rhetorical situations—identifying the setting, subject, participants and purposes (p. 93). This is how students are encouraged to gain awareness of the scene and the interaction among the elements of the situation so that they understand how the rhetorical situation defines the genre itself and viceversa.

In the next step, students concentrate on content, rhetorical appeals such as logos, pathos and ethos, structure, format and linguistic features (p. 94). The final step provides students the guidelines to interpret the identified patterns to gain a better understanding of what the patterns reveal about the genre, its situation and the scene. This step requires a great deal of critical reflection and analysis on the side of the students to be able to infer the social and ideological implications of the genre. By performing all of these stages, students are provided with a multi-dimensional view of genre as discussed in the previous chapter. It is only after students have

applied this genre analysis and gained awareness of the rhetorical and contextual elements of the genre in study that they engage in the writing process.

The process of writing, informed by Flower and Hayes (1980; 1981), involves inventing, drafting, revising, and presenting. These processes do overlap and interact between each other. Inventing is useful in the generation of ideas, e.g., outlining, brainstorming, talking with friends. In fact, observing and describing scenes as part of genre analysis are invention strategies themselves. Drafting with genres relates to the way writers draft their texts and how they look differently based on the scenes, situations and genres, just the same way they invent differently, writers draft and revise differently (p. 111). Keeping the rhetorical purpose in mind is a very important strategy at this point. The process of revising genres is usually performed after drafting the texts, but it can also vary. Revising involves gaining distance from the text, recognizing problems or gaps (detecting dissonance) in the text, and critically evaluating sources of problems to be fixed appropriately (p. 118). Finally, students are expected to present their texts and edit them to share the final product with the intended audience.

We have incorporated a metacognitive reflection and awareness component to the approach to allow students to identify their weaknesses and strengths and think about their genre-based performance. As Negretti (2009) has found metacognition imbues the writing processes and helps learners develop an agentic approach to academic writing. By developing an agentic approach, learners are able to apply metacognitive strategies to make decisions about their own reading and writing tasks (2009). Metacognition requires students to reflect on their current practices, classroom activities, generic features and tasks, as well as attitudes and interpersonal relationships in the classroom (More details about how this approach was implemented throughout the study will be given in chapter 5).

Although both the socio-literate and critical awareness approaches emerge from different theoretical perspectives, they converge in several ways. First, both of them highlight an intricate relation between texts and contexts and the need to develop rhetorical understanding to sharpen students' knowledge of language as variation and constraint. Second, both approaches suggest the need to foster genre critique to shift away from prescriptivist models and passive acceptance of the status quo. New Rhetoricians, however, appear to be more emphatic about the need not only to notice inequalities and exclusions in genres' ideologies, but to resist and even change those patterns as part of students' social action. Johns, on the other hand, seems to be more

concerned about the educational value of genre critique and therefore places a great deal of attention to critical analysis and reflexivity to help students to process “texts intelligently” (p. 99).

Both approaches also coincide with the idea that learning strategies are fundamental to develop genre awareness. While Johns uses learning strategies to assist students in approaching their own literacy practices and those of others, Devitt et al (2004), propose using genre analysis as learning strategies to approach scenes of writing and writing itself. Therefore, performing genre analysis also has the function of inventing strategies before students start writing. Metacognition is a necessary component to develop genre awareness for writing is assumed to be socially situated. Underlying this premise is the idea that if students are taught to interpret writing as socially situated, then they need to develop meta-cognitive strategies to approach writing in flexible ways, that is, they need to apply different strategies every time they approach a new writing task. Some metacognitive activities as seen in these approaches are critical reading, literacy portfolios, group discussions, and reflection. Again, although both approaches concur in the relation to text and context, which one should be the major focus remains an unresolved issue in genre based pedagogy (see previous discussion on this topic).

### **3.4 Genre awareness research**

Three empirical studies on genre awareness in ESL/EFL settings have been insightful to the present study. First, Yayli's (2011) investigation on how genre awareness reflects in the stances of EFL participants in ESP settings, showed that participants transferred some previously noticed generic features into their writing and recontextualized their genre awareness (see also Cheng, 2007). In other words, they used certain generic features that belong to a genre while performing in another. The study applied multi-source data consisting of participants' annotations of their writing, interviews, pre- and post- instruction interviews and open-ended questions. Participants worked on different genres with different rhetorical and lexico-grammatical organizations, analyzed samples and wrote their own texts. They carried out their own annotations to enhance reflection and critical thinking in order to apply concepts such as ‘creative and independent analysis’ and ‘resisting templates.’ Some limitations of the study are, however, the small sample size (n=6) and the lack of analysis of students' genre specific writing samples.

Novice students' existing theories of genres can come into conflict with genre theorists' complex ideas more often than expected. In this vein, Johns (2002) conducted a study on novice students in a linked (a class connected to a content-based course) class curriculum. The study aimed at drawing on students' genre histories to see their evolution of genre theories. The analysis of students' reflective texts and writing assignments on two different, but related research papers, showed the engagement of students in revising their theories of texts and evolving awareness of genre variation, even within the same genre. The study suggests the relevance of revising students' genre theories in order to destabilize conflicting views that might interfere with students' application of genre knowledge in EAP contexts.

Building on the premise that teaching genre awareness inevitably requires learning new genres which then turn into antecedent genres for future tasks, Devitt (2007) conducted a study on first-year composition students from the University of Kansas. Through the implementation of questionnaires and analysis of student writing, preliminary findings showed that students use genres they already know when writing for new situations. Therefore, new academic genres seem to be performed based on the students' prior genre knowledge. The study also claims that although genre knowledge is tacit, explicit instruction on genre awareness can be beneficial leading to the assumption that genre knowledge can be acquired both implicitly and explicitly (see also Reiff & Bawarshi, 2010). Other studies on transferability of genre indicate that prior genres can be transferred in positive or negative ways to new situations. Such studies suggest that successful performance of genres depends on the flexible use of prior genre knowledge and the ability to adapt that knowledge to new situations. These have indicated the importance of helping students in their acquisition of strategies and skills for communication (see Devitt, 2007; Anson, Dannels, & St. Clair, 2005).

Empirical research on genre awareness, however, still shows the need for further research. We believe that given the complexity of genre-based learning and teaching, research efforts should concentrate on the need to gain insights about the extent to which explicit instruction brings benefits to students' evolving theories of genres and critical awareness. After all, a valuable goal in educational contexts is that (or at least should be) students' fine-grained knowledge of genre can be applied into more challenging writing contexts and situations.

### **3.4.1 Linking genre awareness and metacognition: An approach to conceptualizing metacognitive genre awareness**

Genre-based research nowadays, as has been noticed, has led to the recognition or a better understanding of how novice learners can actually recontextualize their genre awareness into new writing situations (see Cheng, 2007, 2008). The need to account for how students migrate from genre awareness, and more generally language awareness, to genre performance still puzzles genre researchers and practitioners. At this point, we need to differentiate between awareness of genres and genre awareness. Cheng clarifies that the acquisition of a variety of genre types and their specific generic features traditionally envisioned as the major goal of genre-based teaching refers to awareness or knowing of genres, a concept closely related to genre acquisition (2007; see also Russell & Fisher, 2010). Genre awareness, in Cheng's views, is seen as the awareness and analysis of generic features of discipline-specific or academic texts and how these features become integrated into the learners' own writing (2007); in other words, he focuses on transferability of genre knowledge. Cheng confirms the need to bring genre awareness, and not awareness of genres, to the front of genre-based teaching and research in order to see the benefits of *knowing genre* on learners' reading and writing performance (2007, p. 304). Thus, Cheng's studies center on the need to focus on the learner and the learning process (see also Cheng, 2006; Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011; Negretti, 2012). More specifically, they stress the need to research about how learners' genre knowledge becomes fine-grained and flexible enough so that they consciously transfer that knowledge to other writing tasks.

As a result, understanding how learners develop flexible ways of using or transferring genre knowledge to other contexts is now recognized as an important area of research in genre-based writing. This interest has naturally made researchers turn to metacognitive aspects of writing. Central to this topic are issues pertaining how learners raise awareness of genre-based features and writing in general, how they use their knowledge to make decisions and choices about writing tasks, and ultimately, how genre-based knowledge contribute to quality of writing and development of critical thinking skills (see (Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011; Beaufort, 2010; Bazerman, 2009; Cheng, 2007; 2008). In our search for relevant research, we have found Negretti and Kuteeva's research on metacognitive genre awareness to be not only seminal, but essential to our study.

Metacognitive genre awareness has been defined as the “metacognitive processes that have as their object knowledge of genre, discourse and rhetorical aspects of academic texts” (Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011, p. 96). This concept is closely linked to John’s (2008) and Devitt’s (2004) interpretation of genre awareness (see conceptualizations above). Negretti and Kuteeva (2011), however, have explicitly tied genre awareness to metacognition to provide a better understanding of the ways in which learners manage and make use of meta-cognitive strategies in their interpretation and production of academic texts.

Our claim, in agreement with Negretti and Kuteeva, is that L2 learners’ genre awareness requires metacognitive knowledge to address academic tasks effectively, especially if those tasks involve adapting, assessing, or monitoring genre-based knowledge to new writing tasks. Research on metacognition asserts that metacognitively aware learners are “more strategic and perform better than unaware learners” (Schraw, 1994, p. 460). It is our belief that learners who develop metacognitive genre awareness can have more advantages in processing and producing academic texts than those who lack this type of awareness (see also Negretti, 2012).

To approach metacognitive genre awareness, we have applied the distinction most researchers make between knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition (Brown, 1987; Jacobs & Paris, 1987; Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Schraw & Moshman, 1995; Schraw, 1998). Knowledge of cognition refers to what the individuals know about their own cognition and cognition in general, it includes three sub-processes: declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge (Schraw and Dennison, 1994, p. 460). Declarative knowledge (knowing about things) relates to the knowledge about oneself as a learner and about factors that influence one’s performance (Schraw, 1998, p. 114). This will be referred to as declarative genre awareness or knowledge of the concepts and strategies pertaining to the task, the learner, and genre features of academic texts. Procedural knowledge refers to knowledge of how to do things (p. 114). This will be called procedural genre awareness. Learners with this type of awareness know how to apply concepts and strategies to rhetorical situations and contexts in which academic genres are produced, negotiated or adapted. This type of knowledge provides the strategies to solve problems effectively and efficiently. Finally, conditional knowledge involves when and why to use declarative and procedural knowledge (Garner, 1990) and it is assumed to help learners to adapt more effectively to the conditions of learning (Jacobs & Paris, 1987).

There are several interpretations and/or conceptualizations of metacognitive knowledge, but it generally involves knowledge of three main types of factors: the person, the task, and strategies. It was Flavell (1979) who first referred to these factors and specified metacognitive knowledge as the knowledge of the factors that affect a particular cognitive outcome or activity (1989). Knowledge of the person involves acquired knowledge of the self as a cognitive agent. Knowledge of the task refers to knowledge about the nature of the task and how it influences our learning, and knowledge of strategies concerns the knowledge about what kind of strategies are most effective to accomplish a particular job. These types of knowledge are characterized as being fallible, stable and statable (Brown, 1989), that is, they represent the personal knowledge people construct about the world, the self and cognition in general. There is substantial evidence that individuals have a great deal of variation in their knowledge of cognition (Sperling et al, 2004).

Regulation of cognition, on the other hand, denotes the set of activities that help students control or self-regulate their learning (Schraw, 1998, p. 114). According to Schraw, it includes planning, information management strategies, comprehension monitoring, debugging strategies, and evaluation (1994, p. 460). Both knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition are not separate from each other, but interrelated aspects of cognitive processing (Schraw, 1998; Brown, 1987; Garner, 1985; Schraw & Moshman, 1995). We would like to discuss the concept of metacognitive monitoring or self-monitoring because of its implications in assessing metacognitive knowledge of genre. Flavell (1993) has claimed that monitoring develops hand in hand with metacognitive knowledge (p. 153). To put it more clearly, metacognitive monitoring includes assessment or evaluation of current cognitive activities and can also refer to the perception of being confused or bewildered by a particular task. It has been found that the learner's realization of a problem can lead to revision or application of metacognitive strategies, that is, strategies that provide information about the learning process (1993). In fact, Negretti (2012) has found that "changes in task perception and metacognitive awareness seem to encourage to take more initiative in writing and to self-regulate their writing by developing a personal writing process" (p. 171).

At another level, Gombert (1993) has linked metacognition to metalinguistic abilities, which he classifies as a sub-domain of metapragmatics or knowledge about the factors that surround the context of communication. He argues that metalinguistic processing refers to the

subject's knowledge about the phonological, syntactical and semantic aspects of language and other metacognitive phenomena that interact with these. According to his findings, manipulation of writing activities activates metalinguistic knowledge, in particular that one pertaining metaphonological knowledge, which has also been related to reading skills. Gombert's research is relevant to understand the role that metacognition plays in the individual's knowledge and understanding of not only the formal aspects of language but also knowledge of the rhetorical aspects of communication itself.

### **3.4.2 Key research on metacognitive genre awareness**

Cheng (2006) has suggested ways to research on what learners learn from genre-based descriptions and instruction including their evolution as writers (p. 76). One suggestion, and probably the most relevant to our study, is that there should be more focus on students' genre-related annotations to get insights into genre awareness and development of discipline-specific literacy (p. 85). Cheng suggests new ways to turn to learners' metacognitive awareness in the evolving learning process as an input to understanding how genre awareness turns into genre-based performance. We have found this suggestion to be insightful to our study.

Negretti & Kuteeva (2011) provide key research on metacognitive theory applied to genre-based instruction from an ESP/EAP perspective. Their study, conducted on eight pre-service teachers of English studying in the Department of English at a Swedish university, took place in an intensive academic reading and writing course over a three-week period. Applying a genre analysis approach on Swales' move analysis model, students were required to analyze and compare academic articles in three disciplinary areas. The main goal was to help students understand the communicative and situated nature of these genres and make their own writing choices at the moment of producing their texts. The research adopted a case study methodology with multiple sources of data collection.

Findings show that a genre-based approach activated students' metacognitive awareness of genre-specific features of academic writing. Conditional knowledge of genre was found to be a key factor in destabilizing students' genre theories and in enriching their views about the complexity of text processing and production, in agreement with Johns (2008). The findings also support Cheng's views that students' own metacognitive skills are crucial to fostering genre



awareness. Another finding is that students' knowledge of genre translated in different degree into their metacognitive strategies which in turn influenced their reading of academic texts in English. Whereas some of them focused on superficial genre-features such as structure, use of references, and types of rhetorical moves, others developed more sophisticated metacognitive behaviors like identifying the main claim and using metacognitive strategies to understand a text structure based on its argumentative development (p. 107).

Their analysis of writing samples suggested that students' metacognitive genre awareness transferred into their writing choices. However, only a few seemed to have developed conditional genre awareness, that is, the ability to adapt their knowledge to their own purposes and writing tasks. They concluded that L2 students need to develop conditional metacognitive awareness of genre to understand and write texts in different discursive contexts. Another conclusion is that a genre-based approach can help L2 learners develop metacognitive abilities that reconcile the individual and discursive nature of academic communication (p. 108).

More recently, Negretti has undertaken research to continue exploring the metacognitive aspects of student academic writing (2012). She has found that metacognitive awareness, in particular conditional metacognitive awareness, mediates between task perception and self-regulation (p. 170). This finding suggests a stronger connection between conditional awareness and the ability to adapt strategic knowledge to specific requirements of writing tasks. The study also highlights an observed dynamics between self-regulatory experiences and an increased awareness of conditional and personal strategies. Interestingly, another finding shows the learners' deployment of monitoring and performance evaluation as tied to the students' perception of the task and their awareness of writing strategies' effectiveness. Negretti's research provides insightful ways of researching and understanding the role that metacognition plays in academic writing.

### **3.5 Teaching argumentation skills through a critical awareness approach**

Apart from contributing to developing metacognitive genre awareness, our study also proposes that a critical awareness approach can be useful to teach argumentative genres to EAP learners. Argumentative genres are considered important in the Honduran context due to the importance of developing high critical thinking skills in EAP learners at higher levels of education.

Argumentative genres are of crucial importance to L2 learners because most academic genres require writers to be familiarized with constructing and developing arguments (Devitt et al, 2004, p. 290). Stating a claim and supporting with evidence appropriate to a given audience is therefore a fundamental skill required for successful academic life and beyond (2004). In fact, argumentation is considered to be a fundamental skill of reasoning and as a skill is regarded as basic to a person's reasoning ability (Voss & Means, 1991).

There are only a few studies on the development of argument skills applied to genre pedagogy. Two of them are insightful to understand whether explicit teaching of argumentative genres can be beneficial to L2 learners. Yeh (1998), gives us an example of a quasi-experimental study on argumentative writing using Toulmin's model in middle-school students. The experimental group showed larger gains in development and voice than the comparison group. Students in the experimental group seemed to apply the heuristics flexibly showing learning of principles of argumentation rather than rote-memory learning and applied that knowledge to a range of topics (1998, p. 49). Students showed improvement of critical thinking skills in terms of making decisions about content and organization of logically connected arguments.

The next study investigated the effects of a socio-cognitive perspective for teaching argumentation in English at the National Chiayi University in Taiwan. One of the findings is that quality of written texts appears to correlate highly with awareness of discourse features in the taught genre (Cheng, 2010, p.12). Posts-test argumentative essays showed that students made substantial improvement in articulating potential objections (counterarguments). This finding highlights the potential of teaching the thinking strategies (metacognition) that underlie the writing of pedagogical argumentative texts (p. 13). Cheng concluded that EFL novice writers can, in appropriate learning conditions, demonstrate progress in formulating effective arguments (p. 20).

Generally academic argumentation in EAP classrooms is applied through argument papers. The purpose of these is to convince the reader by means of logically developing a claim with use of reasonable and credible evidence. This is generally a weakness for most L2 learners in the TEFL program. As a result, giving them some practice on writing academic arguments was thought to be a valuable competence in the course. Toulmin's model was incorporated as part of the teaching and learning process to learn the basics on writing and assessing academic arguments in English (see Toulmin, 1958 for further details).

### **3.6 Major gaps and need of further research**

As discussed, one of the most visible challenges in applying genre-awareness pedagogy informed by New Rhetoric principles is to be able to reconcile the opposing views about the value of explicit genre instruction. To clarify doubtful issues about the benefit of explicit genre instruction, and particularly application of genre-awareness approaches, we argue that more classroom-based research is needed within EFL/ESL environments. It is our claim that integrating New Rhetoric views with successful principles and practices from EAP and SFL can offer new possibilities to enhance genre awareness and critical understanding that can lead students to more mature stages of writing. In agreement with Cheng and Negretti and Kutteeva, we propose that current research on genre applications directed to novice writers, apart from focusing on acquisition of text types or genre features, should lean toward in-depth exploration of how learners develop genre awareness.

Tardy (2006), for example, reports that there are not enough studies focusing on how students' learn under genre-based instruction or ethnographic methods to support explicit teaching advocacy. Tardy's assertion shows the need to engage in empirical studies that investigate the potential of genre-based instruction. It is our view that more research should be oriented to inquiring about genre-based learning on novice learners in ESL/EFL settings.

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the notion of genre awareness and its theoretical and pedagogical perspectives. In addition, it clarified the concept of metacognitive genre awareness, its implications in EAP instruction, and relevant empirical research. The critical genre awareness approach was also summarized and justified as an alternative approach for developing metacognitive genre awareness. Other approaches, mainly from ESP approach, are discussed as practices that can be integrated with the genre-awareness approach proposed to benefit ESL/EFL learners. Although there is recognition about the need to investigate how learners can benefit from genre-based instruction and more specifically how they can extrapolate that knowledge into their ability to communicate in the L2, there is still much to be done empirically.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the nature of the study and the methodological approach adopted to answer the research questions. A description of the research context is provided with the purpose of clarifying the setting and participants. Then, it explains the research design and details the syllabus and course design implemented throughout the study. Next, the data collection methods are fully detailed together with issues of validity and reliability and the data analyses procedures are explained. The chapter ends with a summary of the main points.

#### **4.2 Nature of the study**

The present study consists of classroom-based research that focuses on reading and writing skills in an EAP setting. Classroom-based research addresses teaching and/or learning issues happening in an authentic classroom (Harbon & Shen, 2010). To conduct the study, we adopted a multi-method approach to writing research. A multi-method approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative methodologies (see Kaplan, 2010). There is an increasing interest in Applied Linguistics (AL) to combine these perspectives rather than separate or interpret them as antagonist views (2010). Whereas quantitative approaches hold a positivist orientation to research, qualitative methods offer an interpretive, humanistic orientation by focusing on richer and holistic accounts of individual cases (2010, p. 47). Some writer researchers tend to combine both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gain a better picture of a complex reality (see Hyland, 2010, p. 195). A multi-method approach provided greater possibilities for analyzing and interpreting results from multiple perspectives, which in our view, strengthened the study. Given the small scope and main objectives of our study, qualitative methods were set out to provide primary data whereas quantitative ones supportive data.

In our study, qualitative analyses consisted of providing thick descriptions or details about participants' learning behavior during a genre-based instructional approach. More

specifically, qualitative analyses were implemented to approach text and introspective data to yield results on the participants' metacognitive awareness and overall quality of academic reading and writing skills. Our interest in integrating quantitative methods instead was to obtain data on students' baseline knowledge in terms of linguistic competence, general metacognitive awareness and reading and writing ability from a genre-based perspective. Results on these constructs were used to obtain a wider picture of the students' learning of genre-based features and learning in general. Hence, quantitative data adopted a rather complementary role to qualitative data.

To maximize opportunities for capturing instances of learning, we relied on *triangulation of data*, which refers to the use of multiple sources of data or approaches to ensure greater plausibility to the interpretation of results (Hyland, 2010, p. 195). Quantitative sources of data consisted of MAI (Metacognitive Genre Awareness) scores and reading and writing test scores from a genre-based perspective whilst qualitative sources consisted of students' metacognitive reflections and written samples of argumentative genres.

## **4.3 Research Context**

### **4.3.1 Setting**

The study took place in an intensive Reading and Writing Course offered in the TEFL program at the UPNFM of Honduras. Official permission was granted by the authorities of the university as well as physical facilities (classroom and computer laboratory), technological equipment, and teaching supplies to implement the study. To obtain permission, general information about the scope and relevance of the study was provided to the authorities in order to avoid release of specific information. Since the researcher is also a member of the teaching staff of the department, she took the role of instructor of the course (there were no available teaching personnel who could collaborate with the implementation of the study either). Being the teacher-researcher facilitated a better control of the design and implementation of the experiment (see Loewen & Philp, 2012 for advantages of interventionist studies).

The reading and writing course is a new advanced academic course offered in the TEFL program as part of the new curriculum model on competences. The pre-requisite for this course

is a low-intermediate level of English from the intensive English training component of the program. The main goal of the course is to prepare L2 learners to read a variety of texts critically and develop in-depth practice in academic writing. The class was taught on a two-hour daily basis, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, four days a week. It consisted of six hours for practical and two hours for theoretical work. The study was implemented over a period of 12 weeks during the third semester of the year 2011.

This was an intact class and represented a *sample of convenience* (see Friedman, 2012) because it was the only one accessible to the researcher. Samples of convenience can be interpreted as nonprobability samples (see Trochim, 2002). Nonprobability samples are not based on random selection and are therefore not intended to be used for accurate or rigorous statistical analysis. These types of samples may or may not be representative of the entire population. They are also characterized by their feasibility or convenience to the researcher. Since our main interest consisted of providing insights on how learners develop metacognitive awareness and how they incorporate that knowledge into their reading and writing skills, we restricted ourselves to describe the individual cases in order to meet that purpose. Conclusions then are exclusive to the group being investigated and not generalizable to larger populations. No control group was used because of the lack of access to another class with similar characteristics or conditions to the sample. In addition, the nature of the study did not require to have one.

The physical environment consisted of both a regular classroom and a computer lab. The regular classroom was used for daily lessons and it was equipped with desks, a board, and air conditioning. The computer laboratory, equipped with 23 PCs and a computer server, was planned to be used for online instruction and research on a weekly basis. Some technical issues and maintenance problems did not allow working as expected during the first four weeks of the trimester, but those problems were fixed and the teacher-researcher was able to continue with computer-based lessons as planned. Students had access to Internet with minor disruptions from time to time. Additionally, students counted on the CmapTools Software version V5.05.01 from the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition (IHMC) available at <http://cmap.ihcm.us/download>. This software allows users to construct, navigate, share and criticize knowledge models represented as concept maps (<http://cmap.ihcm.us>). Concept maps were used throughout the intervention to support genre-analysis tasks.

To comply with ethical requirements and ensure the participants' trust, students were told about the general purpose of the study. They were told the study would contribute to improve their reading and writing skills by implementing a new teaching methodology. The new teaching methodology had to be explained beforehand as part of classroom guidelines and procedures. It was not possible to avoid giving them background information about the study because of the nature of classroom-based research. Part of the classroom guidelines involved to provide learners information about main purpose of the study, teaching methodology, teaching resources, and classroom procedures in general from the beginning of the course. Apart from this, we needed to count on all of the students' consent to perform the study; otherwise it would have been an imposition upon them. We also wanted to ensure that learners would feel motivated to participate in it because of the learning that would be obtained out of it. It is possible, however, that providing them with information ahead of time would have triggered the Hawthorne Effect (see Mayo, 1933, more details will be given about this in Chapter 8).

Other ethical considerations ensured that participants would keep their privacy and would work on a democratic environment with equal participation for everybody at all stages of the intervention. It was also guaranteed that none of the assessment applied during the pre- and post-testing stages would be used for summative evaluation, that is, to assign participants' course grades (see Hyland, 2003, for ethical considerations). Students signed a letter of consent at the end of the study for publication of results.

#### **4.3.2 Participants**

There was an initial enrollment of 20 learners in the course, 7 male and 13 female; however, eight of them dropped out for different reasons. Two of the participants did not report any justification, two others reported family and work-related problems, and four of them showed difficulties at coping with class assignments and writing tasks due to their low language proficiency level. As a result, data was collected on the remaining learners ( $n=12$ ). The final sample consisted of five males and seven females. Their ages ranged from 19 to 37 years old. Most of the participants were part-time students who worked during the day and studied in the afternoons. Three of them were already working as English teachers at the time of the study.

Therefore, there was very little or no control on drop outs or external factors that could influence the sample.

Initially, a needs analysis was adapted from Frodesen (1995) and administered to all of the participants to obtain information about learners' socio-linguistic background and academic needs. Reports showed that participants had been enrolled at the university for about three years, except for one of them who reported five years of enrollment. Seven of them had been learning English for about two years, four for one year, and one for three years. Six of them reported to have studied English before entering the university, while the rest started learning English upon entering the TEFL program. Regarding motivation, four of them indicated to be slightly motivated at learning to write in English whereas the rest reported to be highly motivated at learning it.

With respect to socio-cultural background, nine of the participants came from mestizo (a mixture of Amerindian and European), two from Miskito (Amerindian) and one from Garífuna (Afro-Caribbean descent) inheritance. All of the students speak Spanish, but students with a differentiated ethnic background, speak either Miskito or Garífuna as their L1, with Spanish as their L2 and English as their L3. Generally, due to differences in educational and socio-cultural background, students' literacy practices vary as well.

As explained in earlier chapters, students' linguistic skills are generally low in the L2 and thus grammatical and lexical knowledge are below the expected since students are supposed to have reached a low-intermediate level of English to register the class. However, scores on the Michigan English Placement Test (MEPT), showed that participants differed in their linguistic competence, ranging from beginning up to advanced levels of language ability. In addition, some of the most common academic difficulties shown by students are problems at researching (both at the library and online), writing good arguments, citing or using appropriate evidence to support arguments, among others (see details in Chapter 1), which requires to enhance academic skills in the TEFL learners' population.

The MEPT scores helped to allocate students into the five different English levels included in the intensive English program implemented at the UPNFM. Those levels are basic, high-beginning (level I), low-intermediate (level II), high-intermediate (level III) and advanced (level IV). According to our grading system, TEFL learners are allocated in the intensive English program on the basis of the following scores: 0-59% basic level, 60-70% (level I), 71-79% (level



II), 80-90% (level III), and 91-100% (level IV). Final results on the Michigan English Placement Test (MEPT) scores show that  $M = 70.2$  and  $SD = 16.4$  from a maximum of 100 points.

According to these results, seven participants meet the language requirement of the course which is low-intermediate level and up. However, 5 participants are located in lower stages of language proficiency than the one required for the course. These participants had to be accepted in the course because they had already complied with the pre-requisite to register the course. Given that most of the learners were placed in low-intermediate level and below and that the learners had not received genre-based training before, the class was classified as novice. Three students, however, exceed the required level of proficiency placing themselves into high-intermediate and advanced levels. It is assumed that students from low-intermediate level and up have at least the linguistic proficiency necessary to perform academically in an appropriate manner. See the following table for a summary of the results (Students' names are fictitious to protect their privacy).

**Table 4.1** Placement of learners according to the English language levels of the TEFL program at the UPNFM.

Student	Basic 0-59%	High-Beginning 60-70%	Low-Intermediate 71-79%	High-Intermediate 80-90%	Advanced 91-100%
Roberto			X		
Juan		X			
José				X	
Rebeca	X				
Ricardo				X	
Zulema		X			
Rosa			X		
Armando					X
Rocio		X			
Doris			X		
Whitney	X				
Shirley			X		

#### 4.4 Syllabus design and course overview

The study was classroom-based and genre-based instruction was based on the critical awareness approach proposed by Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi (2004). The textbook "Scenes of Writing: Strategies for composing with genres" was used as the main reference for the course syllabus.

The overall course design consisted of the course syllabus, teaching handouts, internet resources and bibliography, writing rubrics, and complementary teaching materials e.g., grammar-based exercises, vocabulary practice, APA style, mechanics (see appendix A for course design).

The main goal of the course was, in accordance with students' needs and expectations, to assist them in the improvement of their academic writing skills in English. The goal was expected to be accomplished by developing students' rhetorical flexibility and helping them to make appropriate decisions when approaching new writing tasks. The pedagogical rationale of the course consisted of a student-centered approach to academic writing grounded on a genre-awareness methodology. Active learning was enhanced through high-order thinking activities such as problem solving, reflective practices, genre-analysis tasks, critical reading, and academic research. From this pedagogical rationale, the following key learning outcomes were specified:

1. Understand the role of genre in the writing processes of academic scenes such as universities, and particularly, those that apply to undergraduate English teaching education programs
2. Understand the concept of 'scene' as the starting point to analyze and then write within a particular rhetorical situation
3. Develop genre awareness and rhetorical flexibility by applying genre-analysis tasks on a variety of argumentative genres such as letters to the editor, résumés, and argument papers relevant to the students' academic and social needs
4. Develop metacognitive strategies that facilitate the analysis and production of argumentative genres in English
5. Develop the necessary self-confidence to make rhetorical choices in order to write effectively and critically in academic scenes

Participants focused on academic and non-academic genres of argumentative type, mainly letters to the editor, résumés and cover letters, and argument papers. Genre analysis of argumentative texts, began with analysis of the key concepts *scene*, *situation* and *genre* (see chapter 3 for conceptualization). Learners concentrated on specific strategies for observing and describing scenes, situations and samples of genres (see previous chapter for details). The strategies were intended to enhance contextual awareness of argumentative genres by focusing

on detailed aspects of the scene and rhetorical situations like readers and writers, shared goals, interactions within those situations, topics people engaged in, patterns of speaking, and the kind of writing usually performed in those situations (see Devitt, Reiff & Bawarshi, 2004). When possible, participants observed scenes of writing like the course itself, other courses they were doing at the moment of the intervention, news printing settings, among others, to collect information about the genres and their scenes. To initiate students in reflective practices, they wrote a reflective paper to think about the new writing course as a scene of writing, for example, to describe their roles within that scene and to express their overall feelings and emotions.

Gradually, participants were introduced to advanced and formal stages of genre analysis by using guidelines provided in class (2004, pp. 93-94, guidelines for analyzing genres). These strategies prepared learners for collecting samples of the genre, identifying and describing the rhetorical situation(s) of the genre, identifying rhetorical and linguistic patterns in the genre, and interpreting those patterns. They collected at least 3 samples of the genre by performing online research, accessing databases, bringing personal samples to the classroom, reading samples from the textbook, using online newspapers or magazines, or sometimes observing and interviewing users of the genre. Most of the materials used in class were authentic samples of texts.

Participants first identified and analyzed more specific generic features—the setting, subject, participants, and rhetorical purposes. This analysis was complemented by looking at the rhetorical and linguistic patterns of the genre, which are the content, the use of rhetorical appeals (logos, pathos, and ethos), the rhetorical structure (organization of the text), format (layout and appearance), and language style (sentences and diction used in the text). At this point, participants looked for recurrent features or patterns that characterized the genre as a typified response to particular rhetorical situation(s). The main procedural goal at this stage was that students could gather information about the genre in study and apply strategies to analyze its generic and linguistic features. Participants compared samples of the genre, analyzed them individually and in groups, collected evidence through observations, readings and discussions, presented conclusions in class, and wrote their reflections and thoughts in journals and reflective response matrices.

The next step of genre analysis was interpreting features and patterns with the purpose of getting insights about values, beliefs and ideological aspects of the genre. The procedural goal of this step was to draw conclusions about the genre in study, its scene and situations and the

actions performed by the people who use it. Given the novelty of the topics, concepts and classroom tasks, scaffolding techniques were applied to support the participants' learning. Some of the techniques were whole class discussions, teacher-guided analysis of texts (teacher-scaffolded), and collaborative group-work discussions (semi-scaffolding peer discussions). By interpreting the features and patterns of the genre and linking them to its rhetorical context, students completed the genre-analysis tasks and proceeded to write a genre analysis paper on their findings and interpretations of the genre.

Devitt, Reiff & Bawarshi (2004) suggest using genre analysis papers to report learners' understanding of genre analysis and their interpretations of particular genres. Pedagogically, in our study, genre analysis papers were used as tools to assess participants' academic writing at discourse level and understanding of the genre. Altogether, writing genre analysis papers provided participants with relevant genre antecedent knowledge to approach their genre-based task on argument papers and writing of critical response papers. Frequently, they were used for discussions in small groups for clarity of claim, content, use of evidence/examples, and mechanical aspects of writing. Normally, participants drafted their papers at least two times, received comments and feedback on their writing, and submitted a final version for evaluation and assessment. A writing grading rubric was used to assess these type of papers and provide participants with feedback on their writing and genre-based knowledge. Participants' genre-analysis writing was assessed in terms of their thesis or claim, evidence and analysis, structure and organization, style and mechanics.

Having completed their genre analysis papers, participants concentrated on writing their own samples of argumentative texts. They discussed inventing, drafting, revising, and presenting as writing processes which are seen as recursive and dependent upon genre use and practices. At this stage, participants discussed their personal strategies, habits and style when planning/inventing, drafting or revising their own texts as a way to help them reflect upon their writing habits and strategies.

Due to the students' profile, complementary grammar lessons and review of mechanics, punctuation and spelling were also set out as part of the training. Participants learned about genre critique and changing genres through discussions and reflections about how writers can make appropriate writing choices if having to resist ideologies of particular users in power. Thinking critically would allow to minimize the danger of acquiring genres as molds to be filled

in or templates to be reproduced. To complete instruction, learners received feedback on their writing, in particular, content, stylistic and rhetorical issues. Final drafts were submitted for evaluation and included in a writing portfolio. Reflective activities were incorporated during and at the end of each genre-based task. This was accomplished by using an adapted reflective response matrix (see Schraw, 1998) and reflective journals (see Hyland, 2003, 2010).

#### **4.4.1 Genre-based task structure**

Participants developed four genre-based tasks in total. The first task consisted of analyzing and writing a letter to the editor on a controversial topic regarding the construction of a hydroelectric dam in an indigenous protected area of Honduras. The second task was about analyzing and writing a résumé with an accompanying cover letter and the third one was about analyzing and writing a critical response paper on one of three argument papers analyzed in class. The third tasks consisted of analyzing arguments papers on topics related to the educational or teaching English field (this was a preparatory task to the final independent task). The sample papers were written by undergraduate native speakers studying in U.S. universities and downloaded from Michigan Corpus Database (see website <http://micusp.elicorpora.info/> for details). The final task consisted of choosing one of the argumentative papers and respond to it by writing a critical response paper. Each tasks required to make reflections in the reflective response matrices and journals. In total, 20 samples of written data were obtained per participant, divided in three genre analyses papers, three samples of argumentative texts, three reflective response matrices and approximately 11 entries in the reflective journals. Each genre-based task is described as follows:

##### **Genre-based Task 1**

1. Performing genre analysis of the letter to the editor
2. Writing a genre analysis paper on the letter to the editor
3. Writing a letter to the editor
4. Filling out the reflective response matrix (RRM) and writing reflections in the journal

##### **Genre-based Task 2**

1. Performing genre analysis of the résumé and cover letter
2. Writing a genre analysis paper
3. Writing their own résumé/cover letter

4. Filling out the RRM and writing reflections

#### **Genre-based Task 3 (Transitional task)**

1. Selecting argument papers on EFL/ESL topics
2. Performing genre analysis of argument papers
3. Writing a genre analysis paper
4. Filling out the RRM and writing reflections

#### **Genre-based Task 4**

1. Choosing an argument paper to work with
2. Planning and inventing
3. Drafting the critical response paper
4. Revising and presenting the critical response paper
5. Writing reflections

### **4.5 Research design**

The study consisted of pre-, in-between (ongoing) and post- test sessions for data collection. Since there was not a control group available, data collection was used for intra-group comparison and in-depth description of students' genre-based learning. The pre- sessions were intended to collect data on participants' baseline knowledge on initial academic reading and writing ability and general metacognitive awareness. Language proficiency was also measured at the initial stage of the study and used to provide information on the linguistic profile of the participants. As explained earlier, the quantitative analyses were intended to obtain a better understanding and interpretation of results on the qualitative data. Data elicitation methods in the initial sessions consisted of a genre analysis and composition test adapted for capturing learners' initial genre-based reading and composition of argumentative genres and a questionnaire on metacognitive genre awareness (MAI).

Ongoing sessions were implemented to collect data on the development of participants' metacognitive genre awareness and improvement of genre-based reading and writing skills. This stage lasted a period of ten weeks and it mainly consisted of delivering genre-based instruction as explained in the previous section and collecting participants' data on metacognitive genre awareness and reading and writing skills. Three data sources were generated at this stage, genre

analysis papers and samples of writing, which generated text-based data, and reflective responses used as introspective methods.

The post-test sessions took place during the final week of intervention. This stage was intended to assess participants' improvement of reading and writing skills and compare changes in metacognitive awareness. Again, two of the elicitation methods were used: the adapted genre analysis and composition post-test similar in format and structure to the one administered in the pre-test and the MAI questionnaire.

#### **4.6 Data collection**

All data elicitation tasks took place over a period of 12 weeks and were applied and collected from the 12 participants during all the stages of the intervention.

##### **4.6.1 Pre-test data collection**

During this stage, we used an adapted test for measuring learners' critical reading and composition skills and the MAI. These instruments were intended to collect quantitative data on the participants' initial genre-based reading and writing skills and general metacognitive awareness. In our study, the genre analysis and composition test was specifically designed to measure the ability to analyze texts as suggested in the genre-awareness approach to be implemented in the course and then to use that knowledge in the composition of a response to an argumentative essay (more details are to be given in the section 4.5.1.3). These instruments are described in the following sections to justify their use and to account for reliability and validity issues. In addition, the MEPT, a language placement test, was used as a complementary instrument to provide information on the learners' general linguistic proficiency to better account for their profile and characteristics. Validity and reliability issues are also provided for this test.

#### **4.6.1.1 Genre-based reading and composition test**

The genre-based reading and composition test was an assessment instrument designed to measure participants' understanding and composition of academic texts (see appendix C for a sample). In particular, the test measured critical analysis of texts from a genre-based perspective and its use in responding to argumentative essays in English. Reading skills as assessed in this test were oriented to application of genre analysis in the interpretation of academic texts (argumentative essays). The writing task simulated the final independent project that participants would have to perform at the end of the intervention, that is, a critical response to an argumentative essay. The test was also administered as a post-test instrument in the final week of the academic trimester. Because of the particular design of the test and the context of the study, this instrument cannot be interpreted as a standard test to measure reading and writing skills in the traditional academic classroom.

#### ***Description of the genre-based reading and composition test***

The test consisted of two parts: (1) a reading comprehension section and (2) a written response to an argumentative essay. Part I was sub-divided into three sections: (A) exploring the scene, (B) describing rhetorical patterns and (C) interpreting the text and its value. Students were asked to answer questions regarding genre-based features such as context, audience, content, purpose, and language style. For this section, students were required to read a 395-word argumentative essay on the topic "Education: Losing its value" and 15 short-answer comprehension questions distributed in three sections, A, B and C. Section A included 5 questions, section B 6 questions, and section C 4 questions.

The argumentative essay for the pre-test was downloaded from an educational website available at [http://writefix.com/?page\\_id=1524](http://writefix.com/?page_id=1524). The website is intended to help learners of English at the intermediate level in writing argument papers. The essays were proofread for appropriate content, register, grammar and mechanics. The reading comprehension part provided the text-based prompt for the written response that participants would have to prepare. The written response part, on the other hand, consisted of assessing and evaluating the claim of the



argumentative essay in order to write a 400-word critical response paper stating a counter-argument or agreement with the stated claim.

### ***Administration and Scoring***

The test was given in paper-and-pencil format and it was applied during the second week of instruction. Due to the length and format of the test, students were given two sessions of two hours each. In the first session, participants concentrated on the reading comprehension section. During this session, they were given instructions about timing, format, procedures for responding, and evaluation criteria; they could ask questions if needed.

Each of the participants was provided with a computer to complete the assignment on the genre-based reading task (exploring the scene of writing). By exploring the website, they would get the contextual awareness to make inferences about the rhetorical situation of the genre, in this case, argumentative essays. Then, they were asked to read the sample essay twice, one for general comprehension and the second one for detailed comprehension in order to identify and interpret rhetorical patterns. The students were asked to complete the written part for the next day to give them some time to prepare for their response and gather evidence to support their claim.

The whole test was weighted on a 90% score. The section on reading comprehension weighted 70% of the test and the written section 20%. Each of the sections had its own scoring system. The scoring of the reading comprehension section was based on an answer-key elaborated and provided by the researcher. A rating scale from 1-4 was assigned for section A and from 1-5 for sections B and C of the entire section; 1 being interpreted as very poor and 5 as an excellent answer in comparison to the answer key. For scoring the written response section, a holistic rating procedure was applied ranging from 1-4 (very poor to very good) on five argumentative features, claim, evidence, warrants, counterargument/rebuttal and voice (see appendix G). These criteria were adopted from Cheng (2010) and Yeh's (1998) work on writing assessment.

The features provided a specific set of criteria to evaluate argumentative writing based on the Toulmin's Method. The criteria matched the objectives and requirements of the genre-based task on the critical response paper required for the final project of the class. The claim is

assumed to be the general statement that contains the argument; evidence and reasons refer to the data that support or justify the claim; warrants relate to the analysis or assumptions that link the evidence and support to the claim; counterarguments are opposite views to the claims which commonly include a refutation; and voice is the personal insight, authority, and/or ideas integrated by the writer into his or her argumentation. Although the criteria were relevant to the task, it was a bit complicated to use it for external rating. Therefore, we applied a holistic scoring method to simplify the task on the external raters and enhance reliability on the rating procedure.

### ***Reliability and Validity Issues***

To validate the test, we applied internal consistency and inter-rater reliability testing. Three raters from the University of Groningen collaborated in the inter-rating task. The raters were not familiar with the participants nor with the context of the study. Raters were asked to score the pre- and post- reading and writing tests for which they were given 24 copies of the test. To assist raters and ensure understanding of the scoring system and rating procedure, a training session with detailed instructions was given to them simultaneously. This guaranteed that the same amount and quality of information would be delivered to all of them at the same time. Each test was coded and formatted in such a way that the rater would not know which student he/she was assessing. Each reading comprehension question as well as the written section was organized on separate pages and in random order to minimize bias while scoring the tests. To be strict with the rating procedure, raters were asked to check students' answers and compare them to the answer key provided by the researcher without focusing on form, but rather on content or meaning. As for the written section, raters were required to concentrate on the argumentation skills of the students and assess how well (or not) they had met the criteria. After completion of the task, tests were collected and scores were digitized for SPSS statistical analyses.

We applied Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Test for testing inter-item reliability. Given that the reading and writing test consisted of two sections, we ran Cronbach  $\alpha$  Test first on pre-test items and then on post-test items. For the pre-test reading comprehension items a coefficient  $\alpha = .69$  was obtained after removal of three low-correlated items, suggesting an acceptable range of internal consistency. For the pre-test written response section, a coefficient  $\alpha = .76$  was obtained using the five criteria explained above. Altogether the combined pre- reading and writing items reached a

coefficient of  $\alpha = .83$ , indicating a good degree of reliability. For post-test measurements, the reading comprehension items reached a coefficient of  $\alpha = .68$  after removal of three low-correlated items, obtaining an acceptable range of internal consistency. In addition, the post-test writing response reached a good degree of reliability with a coefficient of  $\alpha = .85$ . In sum, the combined post-test reading and writing items reached a coefficient of  $\alpha = .78$ , a relatively high degree of reliability. We also ran Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Test on the pre- and post- reading items together and obtained a coefficient of  $\alpha = .78$  whereas pre- and post- writing items reached a coefficient  $\alpha = .88$ . Given the above results, we concluded that the test is reliable enough for measuring reading and writing skills from the perspective of the study.

Then, we applied correlation analysis on raters' pre- and post-test scores. Results on correlation analysis on raters for all reading items are significant across all raters as shown in the table below.

**Table 4.1** Correlation analysis on raters' pre- and post- reading scores

Rater	R1crAll	R2crAll	R3crAll
R1crAll	1	.82**	.64**
R2crAll	.82**	1	.80**
R3crAll	.64**	.80**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Next, we tested for correlation among raters for all writing items. Results show lower correlations among raters with significant results in some of the variables:

**Table 4.2** Correlation analysis on raters' pre- and post- writing scores

Rater	R1wrAll	R2wrAll	R3wrAll
R1wrAll	1	.47*	.70*
R2wrAll	.47*	1	.39
R3wrAll	.70*	.39	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Results above suggest that raters show higher degrees of agreement about reading items than writing items. We proceeded to test inter-rater reliability. We calculated it on the basis of mean

raters' alpha for all reading and writing items. Results on the mean rater alpha for all reading scores reached a coefficient  $\alpha=.75$  and results on the mean rater alpha for all writing scores  $\alpha=.62$ . Mean coefficient alpha for inter-rater reliability on writing items is then lower than on reading items. However, we consider both results acceptable for the purposes of the study.

Validity is crucial for writing assessment, especially content validity. It refers to the contents that represent the writers' needs in their academic or content-based domains (Hyland, 2003b). We designed a task that would require participants to analyze genre features and read an argumentative essay to be able to respond to it by writing a critical response essay. In our view, this task was authentic and relevant because it reflected students' final independent task in class. During the test, students could prepare ahead of time by bringing notes, samples of texts, references or other forms of evidence to write their response. Construct validity, the extent to which an assessment measures particular writing abilities (p. 218), was enhanced by eliciting a target text that was assessed on the basis of the students' ability to write a claim. Claims were evaluated on the basis of Toulmin's Model. They were expected to draw on relevant topic material, justify their reasoning or prepositions, refute a claim, and incorporate their own voice into their responses, all of which are considered to be relevant to academic writing. This test, however, was not piloted on similar student populations before the intervention. Although the test proved to be useful for the purposes of the study, we suggest it to be piloted for future studies.

#### **4.6.1.2 The Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI)**

The metacognitive awareness inventory (MAI) is a well-known self-report questionnaire used in the assessment of metacognitive awareness (see appendix B). In metacognition and self-regulated learning (SRL), self-reports are a dominant method to assess metacognitive constructs (Winne & Perry, 2000). The MAI was designed by Schraw and Dennison (1994) as a tool for reliable and practical measurement of metacognitive awareness in adolescent and adults. The tool is based on the theoretical assumption that metacognition is subsumed in two components: knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition and that these two components are related to each other (see Brown, 1987; Jacobs & Paris, 1987; Schraw & Dennison, 1994). We

incorporated this instrument because of its strong foundation on metacognitive theoretical grounds, its practical administration, and its pertinence to the factor of knowledge of cognition.

The MAI has been used to establish relationships between metacognitive awareness and other measures, most often performance measures or academic achievement. Some studies in educational settings have found correlations between knowledge of cognition, in particular, and students' class performance such as test performance, scores or self-efficacy in learning (see Hammann & Stevens, 1998), including other measures such as GPA scores and course grades (Young & Fry, 2008). In our study, this tool would be useful at assessing general metacognitive awareness as part of students' baseline knowledge and as a way to visualize potential gains in general metacognitive awareness.

### ***Description of the MAI***

The MAI is a 52-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess metacognitive awareness on adult learners. 17 of the items belong to the knowledge of cognition factor and 35 to regulation of cognition factor. Some examples of items on the knowledge of cognition component are: (3) I try to use strategies that have worked in the past (procedural knowledge); (15) I learn best when I know something about the topic (conditional knowledge); (32) I am a good judge of how well I understand something (declarative knowledge). The items are distributed to assess the operational definitions of knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition, called factors. The knowledge of cognition factor is further subdivided in declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge (see previous chapter for conceptualization) whereas the regulation of cognition factor is broken down into planning, information management, monitoring, debugging and evaluation, all of them summing a total of eight subcomponents. As a result, knowledge of cognition allows students to know about themselves, the strategies and the conditions under which those strategies are used and regulation of cognition allows students to plan, implement strategies, monitor, correct comprehension errors, and evaluate their learning (Schraw & Dennison, 1994, p. 466).

### ***Administration and Scoring***

The MAI was implemented in English both as a pre-test and post-test measurement. As a pre-test, it was intended to collect information on participants' general metacognitive awareness. It was administered in the first week of classes. To administer the MAI, students were told that they would be providing information on their learning strategies and study habits. The questionnaire took about 10-15 minutes to be filled out. The questionnaires were immediately collected by the teacher-researcher after students completed them.

For the purposes of the study, a 5-point Likert-scale was adopted to facilitate its completion. The scale ranged from 1 (true of myself) to 5 (not true of myself). To score the questionnaire, each of the factors is calculated by adding the scores according to the number of items per factor. The knowledge of cognition factor sums up 85 points and regulation of cognition 175 points for a total score of 260, calculated by adding the sub-total scores of each of the factors. High scores on each of the factors, and in the whole test, are interpreted as high metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation.

### ***Reliability and validity Issues***

One of the strengths of the MAI instrument is its high reliability in terms of measuring the metacognitive components of knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition (see Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Schraw, 1997; Young & Fry, 2008; Hamman & Stevens, 1998). Results of the Pearson Correlation analysis indicated a very strong correlation of the sub-components within the knowledge of cognition factor (KC). Declarative knowledge (DK) showed a coefficient of  $r = .88$ , procedural knowledge (PK) a coefficient of  $r = .84$  and conditional knowledge (CK) a coefficient of  $r = .95$ . Based on these results, we assumed that these constructs are in direct relationship to one another. To test for internal consistent reliability, we applied Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Test. On the factor of knowledge of cognition, the MAI showed a statistical coefficient of  $\alpha = .83$ , on regulation of cognition  $\alpha = .87$ , and on the total items  $\alpha = .91$ . In order to measure the relationship between both factors, a correlation test was applied resulting in  $r = .88$ , which indicates a strong correlation, a result higher than the one reported by Schraw and Dennison at  $r = .54$  (1994). In general, the instrument shows a high degree of consistency when assessing

metacognitive awareness in general as well as both factors of knowledge and regulation of cognition.

Although the MAI has been found to be highly reliable, its validity is still in need of further research. The instrument contains 17 items targeted to the students' metacognitive knowledge comprised of declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge. According to Pintrich, Wolters and Baxter (2000), content validity depends on how well the number of items sample the construct that it intends to measure, which in the case of the MAI, has not been empirically tested enough. Negretti (2009) has also pointed at the lack of contextualization of the MAI to second language writing contexts, which compromises its content validity. Regarding external validity, results on MAI scores and other measurements such as reading comprehension test scores or academic achievement have indicated positive but moderate relations (see Schraw and Dennison, 1994; Pintrich, Wolters & Baxter, 2000). Other studies have revealed discrepancies, but also usefulness on the application of this tool (see Muis, Winne, & Jamieson-Noel, 2007; Sperling et al, 2004). Literature suggests that achieving reliability and validity of metacognitive instruments has proved to be difficult for a variety of reasons, one of which relates to the mismatch between the theoretical conceptualization of metacognitive constructs and the empirical data (see Pintrich, Wolters & Baxter, 2000; Muis et al, 2007). This is one of the reasons for which more research needs to be done regarding instruments for assessing metacognition.

#### **4.6.1.3 The Michigan English Placement Test (MEPT)**

This test was applied as a complementary instrument to measure participants' general language competence in order to build the linguistic profile of the students participating in the study. The MEPT was developed as a placement test for institutional use by the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Michigan and its primary function is to classify students into homogeneous levels of language ability as they enter an intensive English course. It provides optimal discrimination at intermediate levels of language ability and has been used as a means for assessing L2 proficiency in foreign universities (see Wistner, Sakai & Abe, 2009). The test is used in the TEFL program at the UPNFM for placement purposes and it was provided to the researcher for the purposes of the study.

### ***Description of the MEPT***

The test consists of a booklet with three different forms, A, B, C and an answer sheet. It contains four sections: listening comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Altogether the test comprises 100 items of multiple choice, sub-divided in 20, 30, 30 and 20 items respectively. The listening section comprises two types of multiple choice questions: response evaluation and paraphrase recognition (see Buck, 2001 for specifications). The grammar section consists of multiple-choice tasks that cover a variety of grammatical structures such as pronouns, word order, verb tenses, coordinating conjunctions, among others. The vocabulary section involves filling in the gaps exercises and tests knowledge of high frequency vocabulary for conversational and academic purposes. And the reading section consists of short prompts with questions which test takers answer by applying inferences from the reading.

### ***Administration and Scoring***

The test was applied during the second week of classroom instruction. It was applied only as a pre-test because our main interest was to build students' profile in order to use this information to interpret results. During the test, students received instructions about test format, marking procedures, and purpose of the activity, including ethical behavior while taking the exam. Participants were given 65 minutes to complete the test. The MEPT's scoring method is weighted on a scale of 0 to 100%, one point-value per question. The scoring was carried out by using an answer sheet provided beforehand. Incorrect answers were counted and deducted from the total 100%. Raw scores on the MEPT allocate students into one of six levels of language proficiency as determined by the ELI Center (<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/>), labeled from beginning up to advanced-intermediate proficiency levels.

### ***Reliability and Validity Issues***

To ensure reliability of the test scoring, a researcher's assistant who had experience at scoring the MEPT was requested to collaborate as an external rater. The researcher's assistant was an outstanding senior student from the TEFL program. She also volunteered as a tutor at the TEFL



Writing Center of the department; absolute discretion and confidentiality were guaranteed. To ensure accuracy of scoring procedures, the teacher-researcher double checked the marks on the answer sheets and matched them with the assigned scores finding no discrepancies or mismatches with the reported scores. The MEPT scores were not shared with the participants to avoid apprehensive feelings and were not used whatsoever to evaluate participants with respect to their final course grades.

To account for internal consistency, we applied Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Test. The resulting coefficient was  $\alpha = .95$  for the total items, indicating very high reliability. In addition, inter-item correlations were applied, obtaining the following results: Listening section  $\alpha = .88$ , grammar section  $\alpha = .87$ , vocabulary section  $\alpha = .86$  and reading section  $\alpha = .81$ . All of these coefficients suggest acceptable levels of reliability. To measure the relationship among each of the sections, a Pearson Correlation Test was run obtaining the following results: Listening section  $r = .67$ , reading section  $r = .87$ , grammar section  $r = .93$ , and vocabulary  $r = .93$ . All in all, the test proved to be reliable enough for the purposes of the study.

#### **4.6.2 In-Test Data Collection**

This section describes and justifies the data collection methods and materials utilized in the gathering of qualitative data. Text data are a major source of data for writing research and provide a means to seek ways to understand how people use language in specific contexts (Hyland, 2003b, p. 260). Text data were gathered by means of genre analysis papers and participants' samples of writing which consisted of three varieties of argumentative texts: the letter to the editor, the résumé and cover letters, and a critical response paper. The goal of gathering text data was to concentrate on participants' production of texts to provide thicker descriptions of their understanding of genre-relevant features and applications of their genre knowledge into their own writing choices (see Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011). Metacognitive data, collected through reflective response matrices and journals, were expected to capture instances of declarative, procedural and declarative awareness of genre-based features and writing tasks. Data at this stage were collected for a period of 11 weeks of academic work.

#### **4.6.2.1 Genre Analysis Papers**

Genre analysis papers were one of the major sources of text data. This data source was expected to yield results on participants' understanding of genre-relevant features, and together with written reports on reflective matrices and journals, they were expected to yield results on development of metacognitive genre awareness. Hyland (2003b) asserts that a sample student essay or exam writing may provide insight into student use of particular forms or the assumptions underlying different choices (p. 261). Apart from being representative of participants' understanding of generic features, genre analysis papers were also relevant at assessing participants' discourse competence and academic writing skills.

Assessment of genre analysis papers was carried out by the teacher- researcher using an analytic rubric (see appendix D), previously discussed, revised and agreed upon with a colleague with teaching experience in academic writing. The rubric consisted of the following criteria: (1) Thesis or Claim (30%); (2) Evidence and Analysis (30%); (3) Structure and Organization (20%); (4) Style (10%), and (5) Mechanics (10%). Papers within a range of 91-100, were graded as excellent, within 81-90 very good, within 71-80 good, adequate if between 60-70, and poor if between 0-59. This grading system and rubric was adapted from [www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/davisgrant/rubrics/Grading-Rubric\\_Morris.pdf](http://www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/davisgrant/rubrics/Grading-Rubric_Morris.pdf)). Scores given on the genre analysis papers were used as cumulative points towards the final course grade.

#### ***Description of Genre Analysis Papers***

Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi (2004) propose using genre analysis papers to assess students' understanding of the genre. Genre analysis papers are student-generated samples of writing on the analysis of generic features. They are classified as an academic genre that consists of an analysis paper with a claim about the topic, development of the thesis by using specific examples or evidence, and a conclusion that reasserts or reinforces the claim. In structure, they reflect the genre analysis procedure followed in class to analyze genres. First, it introduced and described the rhetorical situation, then it described the rhetorical patterns, and finally it interpreted those patterns to infer conclusions or reevaluate the claim about the genre in light of the findings on the genre. Its format and content followed common guidelines for academic papers such as

citations and references according to APA style, use of transitions to logically connect sentences and paragraphs, rhetorical strategies, an objective tone, and a formal academic layout for presentation. This source of data would contribute to answer the research question on students' development of critical reading skills.

#### **4.6.2.2 Participants' writing samples on argumentative genres**

Participants' writing samples consisted of a letter to the editor, a résumé and its corresponding cover letter and a critical response paper. They were elaborated during classroom instruction—in-test sessions—and constituted the main source of text data. These authentic samples of argumentative writing, were expected to be helpful at identifying how students use their genre knowledge to make choices about their own reading and writing. They were relevant to provide thick (in-depth) descriptions of participants' recontextualization of genre awareness and adaptation of writing strategies to new writing contexts and tasks (see Cheng, 2007; Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011).

#### ***Description of Genres***

Letters to the editor (a public genre) and cover letters/résumés (a personal genre) are classified as situated rhetorical genres since they are specific to rhetorical situations either in or outside academic contexts (see Reiff & Bawarshi, 2011, p. 318). These genres gave students practice in composing persuasive writing on social and personal topics that linked the classroom with the community and workplace contexts (see Johns, 1997). Conversely, argument papers gave participants the opportunity to develop skills on more complex classical argumentation used in academic contexts. In general, argumentative genres are those intended to persuade or convince readers through some kind of reasoning or evidence of truth.

The letter to the editor is an example of a public genre—also civic genres—used to shape people's opinion on political or social issues that affect the community and therefore seek action or public consensus among members of society (Devitt, Reiff & Bawarshi, 2004). It differs from other academic genres in that it is directed to a larger audience other than the instructor to engage in dynamic dialogue around public issues, a characteristic that shows its highly persuasive

nature. This genre was relevant for participants to practice persuasive writing on topics relevant to their communities and personal interests.

Résumés and cover letters are complementary genres specifically used to obtain access to workplace scenes (Devitt, Reiff & Bawarshi, 2004). The résumé is used to highlight the accomplishments and abilities to show to a prospective employer (p. 477) while the cover letter highlights important aspects of the résumé and provides greater detail on qualifications (p. 483). The résumé is classified as argumentative writing because of the persuasion to be exerted on the prospective employer about the applicant being the best candidate for the job (p. 477). This genre added authenticity to the genre-based tasks and motivated participants to write a text that is highly useful at some point in their professional career.

In argument papers, the writer's main goal is to take a stand in relation to the subject to convince the reader through logical reasoning and the use of reliable and sound evidence (Devitt, Reiff, & Bawarshi, 2004). These papers are highly academic and reader-oriented, though the most common reader in the academic context is the teacher. The structure of these papers traditionally consists of Toulmin's approach (1958)—an introduction, which states the claim, a background or explanation of the issue/problem, development of the reasons or evidence to support the claim, a summary or refutation of opposing views, and conclusion. Argument papers involve a high level of academic skills generally based on research, analysis and evaluation of evidence and establishing a position about the topic.

Reading and analyzing argument papers on EFL/ESL topics prepared the participants for their final writing task which consisted of writing a critical response, a different but related genre to academic argument papers. A critique is an analysis of and commentary on another piece of writing that usually consists of a summary and a response (SIUC Writing Center, [www.siu.edu/~write](http://www.siu.edu/~write)). The rhetorical structure of this genre usually consists of an introduction, a body with a summary, an analysis of the evidence, a critique namely the response or reaction to the claim), a conclusion and other references if they have been used to support the review ([www.siu.edu/~write](http://www.siu.edu/~write)). Writing critical response papers would require higher thinking skills and more effort on the side of the learners to transfer their new knowledge. This was thought to be useful to observe learners' ability to adapt their knowledge to more challenging writing tasks, but it is possible that that task would have represented a more complex rhetorical problem for them.

For the purposes of grading the writing samples, the researcher used analytic rubrics adapted for each of the genres (see appendices E, F, and G). Similarly to genre analysis papers, scores on argumentative genres were used as cumulative points towards final grades. For research purposes, however, cross-rater reliability was applied through the collaboration of six Honduran raters with extensive teaching experience in English as a second/foreign language. All of the raters have accredited master's degrees and one of them is pursuing a PhD degree in Linguistics. Four of them are not directly involved with the students or the institutional setting. One of them is currently an English instructor at the English Department, but she was not in contact with the participants at the moment of the study. Another one is involved with an academic exchange program from the USA within the institution but outside the English Department. There were two raters per genre; each of them were provided with the corresponding instructions, the corresponding grading rubric, and a scoring record sheet to report the grades and observations (see details in chapter 8 for rating task on writing samples and inter-rater reliability).

#### **4.6.2.3 Introspective Methods**

Metacognition requires some form of conscious attention on writing acts and processes; therefore, using introspective methods is essential to collect information on writers' internal thoughts. In our study, we implemented written verbal reports or retrospective written recall in the form of reflective journals and reflective response matrices to collect introspective data.

Verbal reports have been common approaches in collecting metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive control (Baker & Cerro, 2000), yet they have been critiqued due to inconsistencies at capturing metacognitive knowledge in agreement with metacognitive performance (Garner, 1987; Brown, 1987; Baker & Cerro, 2000). This refers to the lack of coherence or potential mismatch between the participant's ability to report what he/she knows and what he/she does. There are three possible explanations to this phenomenon. One of them is the insufficient sampling of both knowledge and cognitive performance, a second one is verbal-report dilemmas or inability to demonstrate knowledge (cognitive processes exceeds the verbal product), and the third is glib verbalizing or excess of verbal product compared to cognitive processing (see Garner, 1987). It is important to be aware of such discrepancies to minimize

potential gaps in the collection of metacognitive data. In an attempt to reduce potential gaps at the moment of collecting metacognitive data, we integrated two methods of collection based on reflective journals and reflective response matrices.

### ***Description of the Reflective Response Matrix (RRM)***

Schraw (1998) proposes the use of strategy evaluation matrices as instructional resources to improve knowledge of cognition and learning in general (see appendix H). They are used to collect information on learners' explicit declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge of strategies used throughout a learning cycle. These matrices consist of graphics with columns that specify the strategy, how to use it, and the conditions and reasoning on why is the strategy used (1998). We named the tool *reflective response matrix (RRM)* and we divided it in four columns that specify the *what*, *how*, *when* and *why* to use a particular genre, genre feature, concept or strategy. The instrument includes the participant's name, number of entry, the name of the genre-analysis task (name of the genre or assignment referred to), and the date of the entry. RRM's were filled out upon completion of every genre-based writing task and were collected together with the writing samples of the genre. RRM's provided domain-specific and structured responses on each of the sub-components of metacognitive knowledge.

### ***Description of Diaries or Journals***

Journal writing supports effective acquisition and transferability of cognitive and metacognitive skills (Perkins, Simmons, & Tishman, p. 20—in Dunlop, 1990). Negretti (2012) also applies journals to elicit learners' metacognitive awareness by specifying tasks, strategies to approach them, progress and final performance. Similarly, in our study, journals were used to collect participants' metacognitive awareness of genre-relevant features, writing tasks, including feelings towards the class and their own learning (see appendix I). Journals allowed participants to write in private about the things they did and learned during classroom instruction, their metacognitive strategies, difficulties, and how they went about solving those difficulties. They wrote once a week and were given questions as prompts to help focus on the issues of interest to

the researcher. Journals were collected every two weeks for revision and comments. Confidentiality on participants' reflections was kept throughout the process.

#### **4.6.3 Post-Test Data Collection**

As explained before, the post-data collection methods consisted of the MAI and the reading and writing test which were implemented during the last week of instruction. This time, the reading and writing post-test included a different argumentative essay entitled "Value of History and Literature Vs Value of Math and Science" available online at <http://www.testmagic.com/test/ViewDtlEssay.asp?EssayID=24&TopicID=124>. Test Magic Website is a free online resource for learners of English to practice the GRE, MAT and TOEFL tests. Both tests were applied to compare results with pre-test scores on reading and writing skills and general metacognitive awareness.

### **4.7 Data Analysis Procedure**

#### **4.7.1 Qualitative analysis procedure**

Qualitative data were divided in text-based and introspective data. To approach text-based data we applied the constant comparative method of analysis as suggested by Cheng (2007, 2011) and Negretti & Kuteeva (2011). This approach to research applies inductive analysis of data with the purpose of formulating theory through the generation of categories and their relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process of analysis is applied by coding the data, often in two modes: open and axial. By making comparisons and asking questions, open coding assigns codes, labels or concepts to discrete happenings, events or instances of phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). After conceptualizing and categorizing the data, axial coding is applied to the entire data in order to find relationships between categories and sub-categories through the use of more specific dimensions such as conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences (p. 96). There can be overlap and alternation between these two processes. The following steps summarize the procedure:

1. Choose a sub-set of the data, read it and write detailed comments, key words or phrases on important aspects or ideas
2. Compare the comments with subsequent units of data to establish regularities or patterns
3. Apply categories and patterns within and across the entire data to identify sub-categories and closer relationships – themes
4. If necessary more selective coding is applied to refine on particular categories or sub-categories until an in-depth theoretical understanding of the data is obtained
5. Review categories and themes to confirm or disconfirm initial findings—during open coding—in relation to the theoretical framework (to develop more consistent or plausible theoretical propositions or refined the existing ones)
6. Cross-check coding of categories for inter-rater reliability

To operationalize the method, we divided the data into three different sets, primary, secondary and complementary data, each consisting of 4 sample cases. Open coding was thoroughly performed on four sample cases that constitute the primary dataset. First, each reflective response matrix and reflective journal was organized and digitized in a database for easier access and treatment. Then, each of the reflective response matrices and journals were read several times to account for key phrases, words or concepts that would link the data to our main theoretical categories, declarative, procedural and conditional genre awareness (see also Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011; Cheng, 2007, 2011, for further details on open coding). During the process of coding some guiding questions were applied, e.g., *What is in the data? What is not? What instances of students' comments and reflections suggest declarative, procedural or conditional awareness of genre?* Learners' reflections and comments were organized into units of analysis and collected in organizational charts. Units of analysis consisted of sentences and/or short paragraphs in RJs and sentences and/or phrases in RRM.

As more intensive open coding was applied, emerging sub-categories and properties were identified and repeatedly filtered out until most meaningful ones were obtained in relation to the research questions. This process allowed identifying common themes or patterns throughout the data. Following this, axial coding was applied to the data to identify relationships and/or variations among sub-categories and properties. This further coding would facilitate in-depth analysis of data and specification of conclusions regarding development of metacognitive



awareness. In our study, axial coding was approached with flexibility so that new sub-categories or properties would be integrated to previous findings and tested again for consistent results. For this reason, it was not applied as rigorously as suggested in the literature. We used Nvivo software version 10 to refine coding on sub-categories and properties and wrote memos to keep track of findings and thoughts generated during the process.

#### **4.7.1 Quantitative Analyses Procedure**

Descriptive quantitative analyses were performed on pre- and post- MAI scores and the reading and writing pre- and post-test scores by means of SPSS statistical software. Pre-test and post-test scores are presented as a complement to the qualitative analyses. Due to the small number of participants in the study, we did not apply inferential statistical tests. Consequently, we did not interpret differences between pre-test and post-test scores in terms of changes of knowledge and skills.

#### **4.8 Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the nature and research methodology of the study. It explains and justifies the multi-method approach adopted, but highlights the qualitative nature of the study. The study also involved classroom-based research characterized by a genre-based instructional intervention based on the critical genre-awareness approach proposed by Devitt et al (2004). Since there was no control group available, comparison of results was to be done within and among the cases in the form of in-depth descriptions. Methods and instruments of data collection implemented were described in detail and justified in the chapter. Initially, students were assessed on the constructs of general metacognitive awareness and academic reading and writing skills. Then, metacognitive data was obtained from learners' reflections on reflective matrices and journals whilst text-based data were collected on genre analysis papers and argumentative genres. Next, students were tested on genre-based reading and writing skills and general metacognitive awareness to account for developmental changes. Finally, the analyses procedures for both quantitative and qualitative data are described.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Findings on the development of metacognitive genre awareness**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The present chapter reports the findings related to our first research question on the ways in which a critical genre-awareness approach and metacognition enhance metacognitive genre awareness. The underlying assumption behind the research question is that a genre-based approach with a focus on genre awareness and metacognition benefits L2 students' metacognitive awareness of rhetorical and discursive aspects of academic texts (see Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011). The findings involve both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analyses report the findings on the MAI pre- and post- test scores which have the purpose of establishing students' baseline knowledge on general metacognitive awareness to provide a broader view of the qualitative analyses. The qualitative analyses, on the other hand, were carried out on the data obtained from reflective response matrices (RRMs) and reflective journals (RJs) with the purpose of providing a detailed account of learners' development of metacognitive genre awareness at a qualitative level.

#### **5.2 Results on metacognitive genre awareness**

In order to capture metacognitive instances of genre-based learning, we relied on reflective response matrices and reflective journals. Reflective response matrices (RRMs) consisted of four columns that indicated the *what*, *how*, *when* or *why* learners use cognitive strategies while performing particular tasks. We interpreted this instrument as being product-oriented relevant to capture learners' metacognitive knowledge in its three different sub-components: declarative, procedural and conditional. Reflective journals (RJs), on the other hand, were used as a process-oriented method in the collection of learners' thoughts and reflections about their genre-based and academic performance.

After applying open coding on introspective data and establishing a link between these and our metacognitive framework, we applied axial coding. Axial coding allowed us to look at

the data in detail and identify relevant sub-categories and properties to explain potential development of metacognitive genre awareness. Findings include reflections across genre-based tasks and participants. They are first reported on primary cases and then on secondary and complementary cases. See table 5.1 for a summary of findings on coding across categories, data sources and references. Pre-defined categories include the sub-categories that emerged throughout the data, the data sources include the number of data sources in which the code(s) was/were present per category, and the references indicate the number or frequency that each code occurred in the data.

**Table 5.1**Metacognitive genre awareness: Categories, data sources and references

Categories and sub-categories	Data sources per category	References
<b>I. Declarative genre awareness</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>130</b>
1.1 Declarative awareness of concepts and strategies relevant to task and learning		48
1.2 Declarative awareness of task and learning context		42
1.2.1 Awareness of difficulty		
1.2.2 Awareness of importance		
1.3 Declarative awareness of the self as a learner or cognitive agent		40
<b>II. Procedural genre awareness</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>155</b>
2.1 Awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks		36
2.2 Awareness of strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes		39
2.3 Awareness of strategies to plan and organize the act of writing		9
2.4 Awareness of strategies to write effectively within the genre		61
2.5 Awareness of strategies to improve academic performance		10
<b>III. Conditional genre awareness</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>
3.1 Applying genre knowledge in rhetorical situations beyond the classroom		26
3.2 Applying genre knowledge across academic tasks and contexts		22
<b>IV. Monitoring cognitive performance</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>39</b>

### 5.2.1 Declarative genre awareness

One of our major categories is declarative genre awareness. This is conceptualized as the knowledge of concepts and strategies relevant to genre-based tasks and learning (Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011, see chapter 3 for details). According to our data results, this is the second most frequent category with 130 coded references as shown in table 5.1.

#### 5.2.1.1 Findings on reflective response matrices

RRMs seem to capture a considerable amount of declarative awareness of genre. Learners reflect upon the task, their own self, and most frequently about concepts and strategies relevant to genre-based performance and learning. These common patterns were coded as sub-categories and further specified as declarative awareness of concepts and strategies relevant to task and learning, declarative awareness of the task, and declarative awareness of the self as a learner or cognitive agent. The following excerpt is an example of this type of knowledge:

- (1) The differences between the writer and the reader and the way the writer persuades the reader are important, for example, the tone, voice, structure of sentences (Ricardo—on letters to the editor)

Ricardo is a high-intermediate learner who shows awareness of elements of the rhetorical situation. He seems to be aware of the interaction between readers and writers within the genre and elements of rhetorical patterns—tone, voice, sentence structure—in order to reach the intended rhetorical purpose e.g., persuading the audience. In the next example, Ricardo continues his reflection on the rhetorical situations of argumentative essays with implications in their organization:

- (2) This kind of paper responds to the act of providing reasons, applying deductive analysis, making inductions and drawing conclusions

Another high-intermediate learner is José, who elaborates on the concepts of scene and rhetorical appeals, showing declarative awareness of genre-based concepts and strategies:

- (1) Scene: It is the setting where communication happens among people that share common objectives and the components that this involves
- (2) I learned to differentiate among rhetorical appeals such as pathos, logos and ethos, the interpretation of these and the role of the reader and the writer

Doris is a low-intermediate learner who shows awareness of genre in the following manner:

- (3) About argumentation, I think it happens when we are able to describe or give our opinion about a text or give our opinion if we agree or disagree

She attempts to conceptualize argumentation in her own words, hereby demonstrating awareness of argumentation and the roles of the participants within the genre. In the next reflection, she also provides a conceptualization of cover letters—suggesting conceptual knowledge of genre:

- (4) A cover letter is a printed document providing detail information about the reasons why you are interested in a specific job

Another low-proficient learner, Rebeca, shows declarative genre awareness in the following way:

- (5) Genre analysis is when we do a critical reading of people's pattern or behavior of communication in different situations within a scene

Secondary and complementary cases reveal similar patterns, but they are not as fruitful as cases in the primary set. Roberto and Armando, for example, show declarative awareness in their attempts to conceptualize argumentative papers and letters to the editor. Their emerging genre knowledge shows understanding of the rhetorical purpose, aspects of the rhetorical situation—roles of readers and writers—and the rhetorical function of the genre. These learners are low-intermediate and advanced according to the MEPT placement test.

- (6) Argumentative papers are very interesting because they are about presenting arguments in any topic. The objective is to change the way that the readers are thinking to make them think as the writer—(Roberto)
- (7) This genre is the ideal one to inform, persuade, and make people act. It is written by common citizens who are concerned about a particular issue. It is fully argumentative because it makes people react in favor of a particular situation, and might make other counterattack and defend their point of view—on the letter to the editor—(Armando)

All of these learners show that they have developed awareness of key genre-based and rhetorical concepts relevant to the interpretation and writing of argumentative genres to varying degrees. Recurrent genre-based concepts and strategies are genre, scene, situation, genre analysis, and the rhetorical situation (setting, participants, purpose and topic). Other key concepts are components of rhetorical patterns (format, structure, sentence, and language style) and rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos and pathos). It is interesting to observe that despite the novelty of the concepts and approach, learners attempt to provide their own hypotheses and generalizations about genres. According to our data, declarative awareness of concepts and strategies is the most frequent sub-category with a total of 48 coded references, from which 30 were coded through RRM.

RRMs do not only capture instances of declarative awareness of concepts and strategies, but also awareness of the task. Learners reflect upon the task in terms of how it influences their cognitive performance or motivation in the learning process. Task variables appear to be an important sub-category within declarative awareness of genre. Data results also show that learners very often demonstrate awareness of the task by pointing at difficulty or complexity. Therefore, we coded awareness of task difficulty/complexity as a property of declarative awareness of the task. Doris reveals awareness of task difficulty in the next reflection. She explains her difficulties in the genre-based task on letters to the editor to her lack of prior knowledge and experience at reading critically and writing from a genre-based perspective:

- (8) A few days ago, I had the task of analyzing letters to the editor using all the tools and knowledge that I have acquired and it wasn't easy although I know all the steps involved, but reading and writing in this way is new to me. It was more difficult when I wrote the essay about the letter to the editor; I felt frustrated and tired, but finally I think I improved in this genre (Doris)

When comparing the task of analyzing letters to the editor to writing genre analysis papers, Doris points out that writing analysis papers is actually more difficult for her than analyzing the genre. Unfortunately, she does not specify why she feels writing papers is more difficult than analyzing genres. This reflection provides insights into how noticing the problem seems to simultaneously activate the ability to monitor performance e.g., *but finally I think I improved in this genre*. It may be the case that reflection on task difficulties can facilitate revision of strategic use and thus activate metacognitive monitoring (see Schraw, 1998; Pintrich et al 2000, Flavell, 1979; and Garner, 1987 for relationships between metacognitive knowledge and cognitive monitoring). Awareness of task difficulty was particularly observed in Doris and Ricardo in this set.

We will now report findings on Zulema and Rosa, who were samples from the secondary and complementary datasets. Zulema was placed as a high-beginning learner and Rosa as a low-intermediate according to MEPT testing. They reported awareness of task difficulties as well.

- (9) Writing is a complex process. The hardest part of starting to write is organizing the ideas. The experience of the writer helps to facilitate the process of this difficult task—(Zulema)
- (10) In Honduras, we do not have the habit of writing a cover letter, that's why I found a little bit difficult to write—(Rosa)
- (11) The writing process is less complex than other genres—here referring to the *résumé*—it requires some steps but they are very useful and they can be applicable in different fields—(Ricardo)

As observed, Zulema suggests declarative awareness of the task by indicating the complexity of writing and the difficulty of organizing ideas when starting to write, a typical problem for novice writers in academic settings. Rosa and Ricardo, on the other hand, show a contrasting but related view on task difficulties concerning prior knowledge within cover letters and *résumés*. Cover letters are not commonly used to support *résumés* in Honduras, which is why Rosa points to the lack of experience within this type of genre. Ricardo, on the other hand, indicates that *résumés* – a common genre used in workplaces— are less complex than other genres and therefore are easier to use. Knowledge of one related genre like the *résumé* and the cover letter seems to facilitate learning of two related genres, in this case, resume and cover letter. We have called this transference of knowledge, cross-genre awareness. Cross-genre awareness refers to the use of prior knowledge or experience within a genre to acquire a new one e.g., *résumés* and cover letters. Finally, awareness of task difficulty appears to be in interaction with awareness of the self, another sub-category discussed later, see expressions like e.g., *I felt frustrated and tired; I found it difficult....*

Another property concerning declarative awareness of the task is importance or utility. This refers to the learners' perceptions about the value or utility of a task, concept or activity in terms of meeting the task goals or becoming successful at learning. This can function as a motivating factor in genre-based performance and learning in general. In RRM, only Ricardo reported instances of this property

- (12) As a student is very important since some teachers ask for analysis of information and I do not have any ideas how to do it--(on the value of argumentation)

- (13) It is a very important topic [genre] since this is very different from other genres—the scene here is for workplaces, when someone is looking for a job—

Declarative awareness of the task is our second most frequent sub-category with 42 references. This time, RRM s captured only 9 instances compared to RJs.

Another recurrent declarative awareness sub-category is awareness of the self as a learner or cognitive agent. This sub-category refers to the learners' knowledge and perception about their own cognition and cognition in general. According to our data, it involves learners' personal attitudes, beliefs, and emotions when describing their cognitive processes. Analysis of RRM s shows that learners tend to associate cognitive performance with either negative or positive factors. Some of the negative factors can be the lack of knowledge and/or strategies to perform genre-based and/or writing tasks, personal worries, fear, or difficulties at managing a particular assignment or content. Positive factors can be mostly related to an interest or motivation to perform within a particular genre, a positive attitude towards the task and/or the learning environment, a sense of achievement in the learning process, or a sense of self-confidence at performing a particular task.

In this study, learners reflect on the self in terms of what they feel they can or cannot do during a particular task. Knowing when a certain task will require more effort than others seems to influence cognition. Positive factors can be associated with motivation, self-confidence or task improvement. This is only a preliminary assumption. Generally, we relate this sub-category to declarative awareness of the task, specifically to task difficulty. Doris and Armando help us to obtain a better picture:

- (14) Since I have learned to read and analyze texts, I feel it is easier for me to read and analyze than to write. Writing is becoming a headache to me when I have to write an essay. It is a difficult task but I feel good because I know that I am improving-- (Doris)—
- (15) Writing this genre reinforced my knowledge about writing papers because the more one writes the more one improves one's writing skills—(Armando)—

Doris confirms earlier perceptions about writing being a more complex and difficult cognitive activity for her; however, she feels positive about her own learning. Armando also recognizes his improvement in writing papers. Both reflections suggest metacognitive monitoring. According to this, we assume that the interaction between awareness of the self and awareness of task



difficulty may, in some cases, lead to monitoring cognitive performance. Awareness of the self-obtained a total of 40 references and there were only three instances captured by RRM.

### 5.2.1.2 Findings on reflective journals

Learners were also required to write reflective journals for each of the genre-based tasks performed in class. The following questions were suggested to guide the reflections:

1. What did I learn about genre analysis?
2. What did I learn about academic reading and writing?
3. Was there anything particularly difficult to learn or understand?
4. What would I change or do differently next time?
5. How can I apply genre knowledge into my own reading and writing?
6. When and why should I apply this knowledge?
7. Is the approach used in class helping me to become a more mature/independent writer?  
In what way(s)?

Learners were instructed to write their reflections in full prose and not necessarily to answer the questions in sequential order to give them enough freedom to express themselves. They could also reflect upon other issues that they considered relevant in their learning experience. RJs captured declarative genre awareness in detail. Most preliminary findings in RRM with respect to declarative awareness of genre-based and rhetorical concepts were confirmed through RJs. However, RJs did not capture as many instances of this type as RRM.

We will proceed to look at sample cases from primary data and then establish comparisons with samples on secondary cases. In the example below, Ricardo shows refined declarative awareness on the concept of genre. He has been able to grasp the underlying meaning of genres not as objects but as resources that mediate between rhetorical actions and people's communication in daily life. This awareness complements Ricardo's declarative knowledge of genre features identified in RRM:

- (16) When we talk about genre, we have to consider many important and relevant facts that sometimes we don't pay attention to in our daily lives, e.g., interactions we have with other people, the places where we move forward in our conscious or unconscious decisions, and the roles we play in them-- (Ricardo)

Rebeca, shows declarative awareness of scene, genre and situation, but she is particularly concerned about the application of these concepts in academic tasks and in real life situations

- (17) Since reading and writing workshop began *I have learned about scene, situation, and genre within a scene*. That is important to know if we want to write an essay and how I can include that knowledge in real life-- (Rebeca)—Initial reflections

Correspondingly, Rocio and Rosa show emerging declarative knowledge of concepts and strategies in the following manner:

- (18) Now I understand scene, situation, rhetorical patterns and rhetorical interpretation—and I am also changing my way of thinking about writing and analyzing—(Rocio)—initial reflections
- (19) We can know about the language the writer is using from the words, phrases, and sentences that he or she is using. Phrases can be technical, specific, informal or formal. And the sentences are simple, compound, complex or compound-complex—(Rosa)—initial reflections

Rocio is a high-beginning learner who showed emerging declarative genre awareness that seems to have influenced her conceptual understanding and theories of reading and writing in the L2. Unfortunately, she does not provide further details on the ways her thinking has been changed (we assume she refers to reading and writing in the L2). Despite the lack of details, we recognize her awareness of relevant genre-based concepts and strategies. Rosa, on the other hand, elaborates on linguistic features and pragmatics as part of the rhetorical patterns of the text. We can observe an emerging understanding of language variation according to the social context in Rosa's case, however:

- (20) Language will depend of the scene. We can't use formal language with our friends or informal language with our boss in an interview—

Sample cases in secondary data were more productive in this sub-category with 17 references compared to primary data which reported only five. Complementary data did not report instances of declarative awareness of concepts and strategies in RJs. In general, learners across data sources demonstrate awareness of concepts and strategies relevant to genre-based tasks and learning. Due to its recurrence, this is considered a core sub-category within declarative awareness of genre.

Declarative awareness of task was found to be recurrent in RJs as well. RJs seem to capture more details about learners' awareness of the task in terms of the context and learning conditions in which tasks are to be developed. This moved us to rephrase the sub-category as declarative awareness of task and learning context. Learners in RJs not only seem to be aware of characteristics of the task and/or task structure, but also of the context in which tasks are set up,

organized, delivered and executed. This awareness includes the conditions in which learners perform or are expected to perform. Awareness of the task situated in the learning context is associated with learners' views on how successful they can be at performing within a particular genre. For example:

- (21) ... We were divided in groups and we chose a scene of daily life e.g., when we are students and [we] wait for teachers outside the classroom. *It was an interesting activity because we worked in groups*, sharing ideas and knowing a little more about what scenes mean. *I realized that* every day we have different scenes in our lives--(Doris)—initial reflection

Apart from awareness of task difficulty, Doris also demonstrates awareness of the task as situated in the learning context, that is, the task embedded in the dynamic of the classroom. Awareness of the task and learning context, in our case, is not restricted to task variables but can be extended to the conditions and factors surrounding the task. Some of those conditions can be the teacher-student relationships, learning strategies, teaching resources and materials, and/or delivery of instruction. The next example reveals Rebeca's positive feelings about doing intensive practice in class for understanding and clarification of concepts. This in turn reveals awareness of task utility as well as the interaction between declarative awareness of the task and the self as shown by the italicized phrase:

- (22) *I really liked the way* we worked in the classroom because we did several exercises with the cover letter and the résumé. I think that this way of working helps the students a lot because we can practice and clarify our ideas in class with the help of the teacher-- (Rebeca)—mid-point reflections

Some secondary cases show declarative awareness of task and the learning context in the following manner:

- (23) We were talking about the scene of the ads that appear in newspapers. With this activity we started to understand about the scene. Then we had to write an ad. *For me it was useful* because after that I understood the language, situation, format, organization, and style that applied to ads, so it was easy to do it—(Rosa)
- (24) I remember very well my first week when Ms Linares introduced genres to us. *We looked at an interesting website* where there was an explanation about types of genres. *It was a nice point to introduce genres*, because first we look at examples and then we were able to write a genre following the example—(Rocio)
- (25) First, it was challenging to write a cover letter in which we have to interpret our personal skills. *However, as we practiced and looked for samples, I changed my mind and found it easier*—(Juan)

We can observe that learners reflect upon the utility of learning activities when they contribute to their understanding of key genre-based and rhetorical patterns, in their application of concepts to write within particular genres or in their performance of genre-based tasks in general. Task importance or utility and task difficulty are recurrent properties in RJs, confirming preliminary findings in RRM. The cases above show that learners do not only perceive the relevance or difficulty of the task, but that they also assess to a certain extent whether they are successful or not at reaching the task goal. In light of this, we confirm a recurrent relationship between the learner's awareness of task and self-assessment or monitoring of cognitive performance. Juan, Rocío, Doris, José, and Rebeca are some of the learners with more instances of this type.

Finally, open coding in RJs revealed instances of declarative awareness of the self as a learner or cognitive agent in accordance with findings in RRM. Declarative awareness of the self is not as productive as declarative awareness of concepts and task, but it has become a core sub-category due to its recurrence across datasets. In RJs, learners seem to be more detailed when reflecting upon personal attitudes, beliefs, and emotions in relation to their cognitive performance. In our data, declarative awareness of the self remains a sub-category of metacognitive knowledge and we interpret this as the interplay between cognitive and affective factors in developing learners' metacognitive genre awareness.

- (26) *It was difficult for me to understand the three terms because when I apply that into real life, I feel confused. I think that I need to do more examples...When I did the second exercise in class I understood better--* (Rebeca)
- (27) *Sometimes I pay attention to punctuation marks that I have to use or even spelling; forgetting often about structures or steps I have to follow every time I told to write a formal piece of writing; it gets worse when I am told by teachers to write essays--* (Ricardo)
- (28) *From the three classes I'm taking, I feel that this one will improve my English knowledge much better because I have been focusing my studies on grammar and speaking skills, but not in writing skills--* (Juan)
- (29) *Every day when I came to class I wanted to learn more about how genres are and how genres can be useful in the academic scene--* (Rocío)

The examples above strengthen the interaction between declarative awareness of the self and declarative awareness of task difficulty. See the phrases in italics to notice these interactions. Learners commonly reflect about what they think they are able to do in terms of their understanding of the task, motivation about tasks and topics or predispositions about personal learning or learning in general. In some cases, as stated earlier, noticing the problem seems to

activate monitoring skills which can lead to planning or selection of compensatory strategies. Strategies could be classified as cognitive-based e.g., *Sometimes I pay attention to..., forgetting about structure or steps...*, or socially-based e.g., *When I did the second exercise in class, I understood better*. The examples above reveal the interrelationship between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive monitoring, a stage that seems to be prompted by the confrontation of a difficulty in the ongoing learning process.

### **5.2.1.3 Summary of findings on declarative genre awareness**

RRMs allow the classification of data into categories and further sub-categories more effectively than RJs. However, RJs provide more details and specificity when capturing declarative metacognitive awareness. Both RRM and RJs seem to be helpful in capturing instances of declarative genre awareness. RRM was more effective at capturing instances of declarative awareness and RJs at capturing awareness of task and the self. Learners from all datasets show declarative awareness of concepts and strategies, the task and learning context, and the self as learner or cognitive agent.

With regard to declarative awareness of concepts and strategies, learners show awareness of the overarching concepts of genre, scene, situation, and key concepts when applying genre analysis—rhetorical situation, rhetorical patterns and interpretation of those patterns. Learners also reflect upon their cognitive performance in terms of how successful or not they can be in achieving the task goal and the factors that can influence their own learning. This gave room to the sub-category of declarative awareness of the task and learning context. With reference to this, learners commonly focus on the properties of difficulty and importance or utility of the task. Declarative awareness of difficulty is found to be related to the lack of prior knowledge within the genre—genre schemas. Lack of prior knowledge seems to increase the difficulty to analyze or perform within a particular genre whereas prior knowledge seems to facilitate acquisition of new genre knowledge. Prior knowledge within a genre also seems to facilitate awareness of a related genre giving rise to cross-genre awareness, e.g., résumés and cover letters. Some of the most common task difficulties are the demands at analyzing texts applying genre-analysis procedures, writing analysis papers or other genres, organizing the writing task, understanding genre-based concepts or simply following procedural steps in class.

## 5.2.2 Procedural genre awareness

Procedural genre awareness is understood as the knowledge of *how* learners apply concepts and strategies to the analysis and writing of academic texts (Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011). In general, it refers to the knowledge about how to use strategies in certain cognitive processes or routines (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Schraw, 1998; Alexander, Schallert, & Hare, 1991). According to our data results, this is the most frequent category with 155 coded references (see table 5.1).

### 5.2.2.1 Findings on reflective response matrices

RRMs captured a great number of instances suggesting procedural awareness of genre. Learners reveal: (1) Awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks; (2) awareness of strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes; (3) awareness of strategies to plan and organize writing; (4) awareness of strategies to write effectively within the genre, and (5) awareness of strategies to improve academic performance. Strategies in our study refer to the deliberate actions of the learner to reach a particular goal (see Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1983). Strategies must be selected from several alternatives and directed to achieve a goal; consequently, strategic behavior requires intentionality and effort.

*Awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks* constitutes one of the core sub-categories within procedural genre awareness with a number of 37 references. This sub-category refers to the awareness of applying genre-based concepts, genre-analysis strategies or strategies in general to approach genre-analysis tasks as the basis to interpret academic texts (as well as non-academic texts, e.g., cover letters and résumés). This emerging knowledge is critical for understanding genre and applying genre analysis from a New Rhetoric perspective:

- <sup>(1)</sup> *We have different strategies to apply the new knowledge e.g., analyze the scene, then the rhetorical situation and the rhetorical patterns then we decide how to write our cover letter in order to make our resume more interesting—(Rebeca)*
- <sup>(2)</sup> *The analysis of the scene is important to identify the setting, participants, purpose, and subject as well as writing a paper—(José)*

Rebeca and José, for example, seem to have shifted from declarative genre awareness to more strategic awareness of genre by pointing at analyses of the scene, the rhetorical situation and

rhetorical patterns to start writing (compare example 18, section 5.2.1.2 and example 3, section 5.2.1.1). They recognize the value of using genre analysis strategies to make decisions about writing within cover letters and *résumés*, for example, and analyzing genres to identify (and thus understand) the rhetorical situation. This sub-category interacts with the sub-category of strategies to write effectively within a genre (to be described later). Other cases such as Zulema and Juan show strategic behavior in similar yet complementary aspects of genre-based concepts and analysis:

- (3) This process includes determining and identifying elements such as the scene, situation and genre. These elements are part of the rhetorical situation that allows participants to identify how the communication in a scene is and what situations occur within the scene and what are the purposes that the participants want to communicate—(Zulema)
- (4) [Genre analysis] Facilitates a very specific idea of genres and offers an analysis in detail —(Juan)

Learners not only show awareness of genre analysis strategies *per se*, but also awareness of general strategies in their attempts to read and write academic texts in their L2. Some reported strategies are interviewing participants and analyzing documents, looking for additional information in printed and digital media or using prior knowledge.

- (5) *Observing different scenes* and understanding situations within scenes, *interviewing the participants in that situation and analyzing documents that apply to a particular situation*. For example, in a restaurant scene, there are different kinds of menus. In a hospital there are different patient medical history forms. All kinds of letters, newspapers, magazines are object of analysis—(Zulema)
- (6) [Using] prior knowledge about the argumentative genre in order to know more about it—(Rocio)
- (7) *One of the strategies that I followed was to look for other examples of cover letters*—(Rosa)

While some cases show a great deal of strategic behavior at approaching genre-analysis tasks others show to be more dependent on the teacher's scaffolding and classroom procedures. Compare, for example, Rosa and Rebeca:

- (8) *Another strategy was to read about how to write a successful cover letter*—(Rosa)
- (9) What I consider important is the purpose, once I am analyzing a genre, in this case letters to the editor- I have to focus on defining the situation, scenes, rhetorical patterns—*using the techniques that I have learned in class--* (Rebeca)

In general, procedural awareness to perform genre analysis tasks occurs very frequently, which is why we classified this as a core sub-category. The learners with more instances of this type of awareness are Rebeca, Juan, Rosa, Rocio and Zulema. Interestingly, we have observed that these learners have different levels of language proficiency, from beginning to advanced levels.

Another recurrent sub-category is *awareness of strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes*. This is another core sub-category within procedural genre awareness with a number of 39 references. Learners seem to be very productive at reflecting upon genre-based knowledge and strategies to meet specific rhetorical needs and/or achieve particular rhetorical actions within a genre. Learners seem to be aware of the rhetorical functions (and purposes) associated with each of the genres practiced in class. For example, using letters to the editors to raise people's concerns about community issues—a characteristic of civic genres; using cover letters and résumés to apply for a job and be effective at interacting with workplaces—showing cross-genre awareness; and using argumentative appeals to be more convincing and critical at presenting a particular topic—a characteristic of academic genres.

<sup>(10)</sup> *What I know about analysis of a letter to the editor is that you need to follow some guidelines to analyze the genre and I can use it most of the time to persuade, give an opinion, appeals for actions, make suggestions if you have been affected with an specific issue and you feel concerned about—*(Shirley)

<sup>(11)</sup> *You use a resume and cover letter to find a job—it is important to give true information because a cover letter represents you as a person. Also it is important to create an interest in the reader because it is necessary to request an action on the side of the employer--*(Doris)

<sup>(12)</sup> *I have learned that when making arguments, logic plays a crucial role to appeal to logos; besides that evidence that you give must be reasonable; also it is necessary to give warrants to appeal to ethos and provoke something touching in the audience—*(Armando)

Learners seem to have acquired an understanding of genre analysis and strategies to achieve the intended rhetorical purpose(s) within a variety of situations. Not only do they associate a given genre with an intended rhetorical purpose, but they also connect this knowledge with the rhetorical actions enhanced by that particular genre. For example, Doris shows strategic thinking about how using cover letters and résumés in a truthful manner can help to obtain a response on the side of the employer. This is also an example of cross-genre awareness at using complementary genres such as cover letters and résumés. Despite the fact that cover letters are not traditionally used in Honduras, learners acquired a good understanding of them and seemed



to be motivated to apply their new knowledge in order to adapt their own résumés. Rosa, for example, shows this awareness as such:

<sup>(13)</sup> I can use these kinds of letters to support the résumé to make a positive impact on the employer

Awareness of strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes (or needs) can be useful in helping novice learners to develop goal-setting behavior, an important self-regulatory strategy commonly associated with mature writers in the process of planning the writing task (Flower and Hayes, 1981). In addition, this category involves learners' intentions of developing skills to read critically across scenes and genres to achieve social and rhetorical functions appropriately. Some of the learners that showed more instances of this type of awareness are Rosa, Rocio, Shirley and Ricardo.

*Awareness of strategies to plan and organize the act of writing* was another sub-category identified in open coding and confirmed through other sets of data, yet it did not prove to be as recurrent as other sub-categories. Only nine references were coded in this sub-category, hence this has not been classified as a core sub-category. From a cognitive perspective, planning and organizing has been associated with the control and self-regulatory aspects of writing (see Flower & Hayes, 1980; 1981; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987; Kellog, 1994). Despite the executive functions commonly attributed to planning and organizing writing activities, we classify these as procedural awareness of genre. As has been discussed, metacognitive knowledge has been interrelated with metacognitive regulation. Thus, planning and organizing are interpreted in our framework as part of procedural awareness of genre, but highly interactive with metacognitive monitoring. Initially, this sub-category was conceptualized as strategies to make decisions about the writing act, but through further coding it was rephrased as strategies to plan and organize the act of writing. Some of the learners show that:

<sup>(14)</sup> *Every time I decide to write something, I have to develop strategies to make the process easier and organize the ideas that come to my mind—(Ricardo)*

<sup>(15)</sup> *First we can read the scene in order to know people's behavior to decide who to present our cover letter--(Rebeca)*

<sup>(16)</sup> [I] Searched some samples of argumentative papers on Internet and used Cmap tools in order to organize my ideas about it— (Rocio)

Ricardo, however, does not specify which strategies he uses or intends to use to organize the writing task, but it is observable that he has developed awareness about the value of strategies to manage the rhetorical task in order to be successful at it. This suggests glimpses of self-regulatory behavior that are thought to be helpful at managing tasks that require highly complex skills (see Garner, 1987, for executive functioning). Some other learners indicate specific rhetorical strategies like reading the scene in order to adapt the task to the characteristics of the reader. Some other strategies used by the learners to plan their writing are to search samples on the Web or to use Cmap tools to organize their ideas. Ricardo, Rebeca, Rocio and Zulema are examples of cases that reported this type of knowledge. Rebeca shows more instances, although we observe certain repetition in her reflections:

- (17) *By using strategies like analyzing the scene, then the rhetorical situation and then the rhetorical patterns—we decide how to write our argument paper presenting effective evidence to convince people—*(Rebeca)

Awareness of planning or inventing strategies to write effectively highly interacts with our next sub-category.

*Awareness of strategies to write effectively within the genre* was found to be our most recurrent sub-category, with 60 coded references. This sub-category, together with awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks and strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes, represents the core of procedural genre awareness. It deals with the learners' understanding and awareness of genre-analysis strategies or any other cognitive strategies to write successfully within a genre.

- (18) *The rhetorical appeals ought be used when we write because they are the convincing tools that we as writers use in order to write an engaging paper that appeals to emotions according to the mood of the audience; reflection and thinking is provided by logos, and the reliability of our paper by ethos—*(José on the letter to the editor)—*reflection in interaction with conditional awareness*
- (19) *We have different strategies to apply the new knowledge e.g., analyze the scene, the rhetorical situation and the rhetorical patterns of the scene— then we decide how to write our cover letter in order to make our résumé more interesting—*(Rebeca)
- (20) *The audience is very important since in this way the writer knows how to write the genre—*(Ricardo on argumentative essays)
- (21) *It also requires formal language containing sentences that are longer, more complex words that carry powerful, persuasive, emotional impact—*(Doris on argumentative essays)

José seems to have moved from declarative awareness of concepts and strategies (see example 4, section 5.2.1.1) to a fine-grained procedural awareness of rhetorical appeals to write convincing letters to the editor as seen in the example above. Likewise, Rebeca shows awareness of strategies to write effective cover letters, suggesting procedural awareness. In the case of Ricardo, he shows to be more conscientious in his reflections. He seems to have moved from declarative awareness about the importance of writing argumentative genres and the common difficulties at writing them (see example 13, section 5.2.1.1) to an understanding of audience when writing within these genres. Doris also proves to have evolved from declarative awareness (see example 2, section 5.2.1.1) to procedural awareness of genre in her realization of using appropriate register and linguistic features when writing argumentative papers. Some other cases from secondary and complementary datasets show strategic behavior in the following manner:

- (22) [Writing] A short introduction that includes your knowledge and abilities, where you find the information about the job application and close your cover letter with a respectful salutation – (Rocio)
- (23) *To start writing an argumentative paper the writer has to do research* because he/she cannot start writing without prior knowledge since you have to support your ideas with evidence and warrants to persuade the readers and see your point of view clearly—(Roberto)
- (24) *I learned that sometimes one is not able to write much with ease because perhaps one does not have enough knowledge about a particular issue, therefore, making use of techniques such as doing research, brainstorming, interviewing people or getting help from questions for inventing are good tools for producing and facilitating writing—(Armando)*

Rocio, in example 23, shows understanding of the rhetorical structure as a strategy to write within cover letters, transferring from declarative awareness to procedural awareness to a certain degree (see examples 19, 25 & 30, section 5.2.1.2 for comparison). With regard to argumentative papers, Roberto highlights the importance of prior knowledge to become acquainted with the topic and be able to write effective arguments in order to persuade the reader, in agreement with declarative awareness of concepts and strategies (see example 7, section 5.2.1.1). Armando, however, elaborates on other cognitive (including ethnographic) techniques such as brainstorming, questioning, and interviewing people to approach writing letters to the editor effectively. This seems to complement his understanding of letters as shown in reports of declarative awareness (see examples 8 & 16, section 5.2.1.1). The most prolific learners in this type of awareness are Armando, José, Ricardo, Rosa and Shirley. In general, learners seem to be aware of using their emerging genre knowledge to approach writing across a variety of situations. They appear to have transferred declarative awareness of concepts and strategies to

varying degrees into their procedural awareness of genre and seem to have been able to make important considerations about the value of genre analysis in writing effectively in the L2.

Another sub-category supported by our data, although in a lesser extent, was *awareness of strategies to improve academic performance*. This sub-category obtained 11 coded references. Learners with this type of knowledge seem to be interested in using genre knowledge to improve their academic performance across contexts. The genre that is most associated to this type of knowledge is argumentative papers, probably because of its nature and its application to academic settings. Instances coded under this type of awareness show the following:

- (25) *The most important thing for me as a student is to apply the knowledge that I have acquired in the learning process. This knowledge allows me to get involved in current events in diverse fields and be able to develop a critical mind, to develop my skills in reading and writing, to apply knowledge of different genres, to be an informed person, to be organized when writing about different topics, to influence people's opinion and educate people, to publish information on different topics such as education, science, politics, etc.-- (Ricardo)*
- (26) As an essential tool for students who are getting in contact with the academic scene, helping them to mature as critical thinkers—(Juan, on argumentative papers)
- (27) Applying this process—referring to genre analysis—is important because it improves the ability to analyze and synthesize—(Zulema)
- (28) To learn together with people that have knowledge about what you have already been written about (Rocio, on genre analysis strategies)

Learners show awareness of strategies to develop literacy skills in their attempts to improve general academic performance. Those goals are most of all intended to improve high-order thinking skills, genre-based or overall academic performance, e.g., to persuade and educate people, to mature as a critical thinker, to improve the ability to synthesize, or to learn from people when interacting within a rhetorical situation. In some cases, we can observe a high interaction between this sub-category and declarative awareness of the self, e.g., *The most important thing for me...* (Ricardo). In some other cases, however, this category overlaps with procedural awareness of strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes. The main difference we can establish is that this sub-category entails learners' literacy practices not necessarily circumscribed to the genres or writing assignments developed in class (although related to them), but to more general academic activities.

#### **5.2.2.2 Findings on reflective journals**

Reflective journals have also proved to be useful at capturing procedural awareness of genre and tasks, but most of all pertinent to the sub-categories of awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks and strategies to write effectively within a genre, in agreement with findings on RRM. There are instances of other types of awareness, but only to a minimum extent, and most indicators of procedural awareness of genre seem to be in high interaction with monitoring cognitive performance. In the first place, *awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks* highlights the following:

- (29) *I understand that scene can be a place, and I can read and analyze that scene in order to know how to act in this place. For example, ... (provides an example of interaction in class)-- (Rebeca)*
- (30) *...when I don't understand a thing, my teacher and classmates help me to understand it clearly. Identifying scenes will make me to take a clear message of the whole situation in the written information or any literature piece--(Ricardo)*
- (31) *Knowing all the process about how a scene is structured, setting, situation, participants, subject, type of interaction and rhetorical situation are seminal for the interpretation of a paper. Describing the scene, sets the basis for the analysis. What we did in class in order to understand the editorials was to describe the scene--(José)*

We can observe how Rebeca, for example, reveals knowledge of genre-analysis strategies in order to understand the scene. This awareness is in agreement with her emerging procedural genre awareness revealed in RRM (see examples 1 & 10, section 5.2.2.1). Initially, she reported awareness of task difficulties, specifically at understanding the overarching concepts of genre, scene, and situation (see example 27, section 5.2.1.2). Qualitative results show that she started rather low in her development of metacognitive genre awareness.

In RJs, learners indicate other types of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks. Ricardo, for example, relies on the teacher and classmates as a strategy to clarify concepts relevant to genre-analysis and class contents. This is an important indicator of how novice writers depend on scaffolding support to approach complex tasks. The learner shows an attempt to overcome a difficulty at performing genre-based tasks, this type of knowledge is in close relationship with his monitoring cognitive performance, declarative awareness of the task and the self (see example 28, section 5.2.1.2). José, on the other hand, has shifted to procedural awareness by highlighting the process of reading scenes as places of rhetorical interactions as a strategy to interpret texts. José's reflections are also in agreement with her procedural genre awareness as revealed by RRM (see example 2, section 5.2.2.1). These cases show a great deal of agreement with findings in RRM.

Other learners also show awareness of genre-based strategies to approach genre analysis tasks:

- <sup>(32)</sup> *To do genre analysis, we have to collect samples of a genre, then we define setting, subject, participants, purpose, format, content, rhetorical appeals, etc.* —(Rosa)
- <sup>(33)</sup> *I learned that before reading any paper, we need to analyze the scene, content, organization and so on*—(Rocio)
- <sup>(34)</sup> *The strategy that helped me to understand the cover letter was the examples of the professor and my personal searching on cover letters*—(Juan)

Rosa shows emerging procedural genre awareness, confirmed through reflexivity in RRM (see examples 8 & 9, section 5.2.2.1). She seems to have understood the basic procedure to perform genre analysis tasks as suggested in class. This strategic awareness of genre complements Rosa's declarative awareness reported in RRM and RJ concerning awareness of rhetorical patterns—language, format, organization and style— and understanding of rhetorical aspects of writing (see examples 20, 21, & 24, section 5.2.1.2). Similarly, Rocio appears to have made progress in her procedural awareness of genre to perform genre analysis tasks, as confirmed by units in RRM (see examples 5 & 7, section 5.2.2.1). She not only shows a positive attitude about her newly acquired knowledge, but also recognizes the strategic value of genre analysis in her academic life, probably interacting here with conditional awareness. Overall, she seems to have translated declarative genre awareness to procedural awareness, specifically in her understanding of genre-based concepts and writing as context-bound (see examples 19, 25 & 30, section 5.2.1.2). Juan, in his attempts to better understand the genre of cover letters, reveals metacognitive procedural awareness by relying on the teacher's scaffolding and his personal strategies. This reflection shows his strategic improvement in understanding cover letters, a genre which he had reported to have difficulties with in unit 26 (section 5.2.1.2). Juan's attempts to repair a task difficulty also show monitoring ability applied to genre-based performance. No instances of procedural awareness to perform genre analysis tasks were identified for Doris and Roberto in RJs.

The next sub-category frequently supported by RJs is *procedural awareness of strategies to write effectively within a genre*. One of the most prolific reflective learners in this sub-category is Ricardo.

- <sup>(35)</sup> I have learned that the résumé supports what we say in the cover letter, so they have to be together but the cover letter goes first. *I learned that the language to be used is formal, respectful and clear; the writer has to take care about the tense of the verbs.* Verbs written in past give emphasis to the sentences. The active sentences are useful for this kind of genre. *Writers have to be precise and don't use fancy words.* A cover letter does not have to appeal to pathos, we don't want to make the reader cry—(Ricardo)
- <sup>(36)</sup> In this week, we did some exercises about claim, too. *We learned how to write a claim better and how to connect the claim with other paragraphs.* The claim relates to the evidence--(Rebeca)
- <sup>(37)</sup> *The use of a claim in a paper will give a better use of writing and I'll have an interesting option to start writing*—this will help me to become a better writer —(Juan)
- <sup>(38)</sup> *I learned how to use APA style*—I always hear about it but nobody tells me how to use it. But now I know what APA is, how to use it and how to apply and in which situation--(Rocio)

Learners, depending on the task, show the value of using different strategies to write effectively. Ricardo seems to be able to use his declarative awareness of genre (see examples 1, 12, & 14, section 5.2.1.1) in the benefit of his procedural awareness to a great extent. He has been able to put together his knowledge of textual patterns, and particularly language, language style and register, to be able to write effective cover letters. In addition, he seems to be aware of pragmatics when referring to using rhetorical appeals selectively. He confirms his awareness of audience in his contextualization of genre-based tasks as shown in his reflections in RRM (unit 21). Writing effective claims within argumentative genres is an essential skill and strategy to approach writing in academic scenes. This type of awareness is shown by Rebeca in example 36 (see also example 18, section 5.2.2.1). Similarly, Juan shows an awareness of using claims when writing academic genres and the value of this knowledge at enhancing his writing skills. However, he does not specify what strategies he uses to write effective claims or in what ways claims make him a better writer. Finally, Rocio, who has also shown improvement in her procedural awareness, shows awareness of strategies to use APA style in academic writing, an important academic skill but generally quite challenging for novice writers.

To a lesser extent, learners show awareness of strategies in other sub-categories: strategies to plan and organize the act of writing and strategies to develop literacy skills. Rebeca and Rocio show their awareness of using Cmap Tools at planning and either organizing genre-analysis tasks or writing tasks:

- <sup>(39)</sup> In this week, we have learned about Cmaps and I can see that with Cmaps it is easier to do genre analysis because it is like putting your ideas in order and then to start writing--(Rebeca)

- <sup>(40)</sup> I would like to talk about the training on Cmaps—it was an interesting workshop and I really think that it is a useful strategy that helps to organize our ideas within a genre—(Rocio)

Regarding strategies to develop literacy skills or improve academic performance, Ricardo, Juan and Rocio agree on the usefulness of using Cmaps:

- <sup>(41)</sup> Moreover, this kind of paper helps me to think about the concern in the text being discussed, in the same way to keep us updated with the information we research. It was easier for me to work on those papers with the help of Cmaps--(Ricardo)
- <sup>(42)</sup> The use of Cmaps will improve my academic skills in the writing field—(Juan)
- <sup>(43)</sup> It (doing Cmaps) wasn't complicated, on the contrary it is really useful and I know it will help me in my next classes. Everything that I don't understand about a topic, it becomes clear with the Cmaps. I really like it—(Rocio)

### 5.2.2.3 Summary of findings on procedural genre awareness

Procedural genre awareness is the most frequent of all the three categories in our data. This finding suggests that learners did develop a great deal of strategic genre awareness. Reflective response matrices are more helpful than reflective journals at capturing a greater number of instances of procedural genre awareness. Reflective journals, on the other hand, seem to be more effective at capturing details about the learners' strategic behavior in relation to their own self and difficulties at performing in class. The three most recurrent sub-categories supported across data are (1) awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks, (2) awareness of strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes, and (3) awareness of strategies to write effectively within a genre.

All learners show development of procedural genre awareness to a great extent, although in different ways. Regularly, novice learners do seem to be aware of how to use new concepts and strategies in the interpretation and production of academic texts, but in some cases lack the nuances to specify strategies or cognitive processes. In general, learners seem to have made important transfers from declarative genre awareness to procedural awareness. They have also been able to connect genre analysis to the processes of writing across different genres and have been able to recognize the value of different strategies in such endeavors. Some of those strategies consist of analyzing genre and interpreting patterns to make decisions about how to write, using rhetorical appeals based on the genre and characteristics of the audience, using



knowledge of the rhetorical structure and organizing the genre to write appropriately, or using APA style to structure academic papers.

Almost all learners show procedural awareness to fulfill rhetorical purposes. Regarding procedural awareness to write effectively within the genre, almost all learners show this type of awareness except Zulema. Some learners show to be more strategic and resourceful at approaching genre-based tasks and difficulties in class, others show to be more dependent on external support like the teacher's help. Our data results show that procedural genre awareness is a highly interactive sub-system (see Garner, 1987, on Flavell's model about relations among metacognitive elements).

### **5.2.3 Conditional genre awareness**

Conditional genre awareness completes our model on metacognitive knowledge by providing insights about when and why learners apply concepts and strategies in their genre-based writing (see also Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011). Conditional knowledge, in general, has also been referred to as when and why to use declarative and procedural knowledge (Garner, 1990). According to this, conditional knowledge holds a very important role within metacognitive awareness, one of helping the learner to coordinate his/her declarative and procedural knowledge in order to adapt to the exigencies of particular tasks and contexts.

According to our data, conditional genre awareness is the least frequent of all three categories with 48 coded references (see table 5.1 at the beginning of the chapter). Two conditional sub-categories emerged: (1) Applying genre knowledge in rhetorical situations beyond the classroom and (2) Applying genre knowledge across academic tasks and contexts. The former refers to the learners' awareness of transferring genre knowledge to meet rhetorical needs beyond the context of the classroom. The latter refers to the learners' interest or motivation in applying genre knowledge to fulfill academic requirements across a variety of tasks and contexts.

### 5.2.3.1 Findings on reflective response matrices

Conditional awareness of applying genre knowledge in rhetorical situations beyond the classroom is closely related to the procedural sub-category of awareness of strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes. Sometimes these two sub-categories may overlap. To differentiate between these two, we interpret procedural awareness to be less flexible, more general-oriented, and probably more static than conditional awareness (see working definition in section 5.2.3). The sub-category of awareness of strategies to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes is the most frequent of the two with 26 references. RRM's seem to capture most instances with 23. Rebeca shows the following instances:

- <sup>(1)</sup> We can apply the new knowledge in real life in order to know how to interact with others, to critique something or to convince people about our ideas. For example, writing letters to the editor in order to give our opinion about a topic--(Rebeca)—initial reflections
- <sup>(2)</sup> I think we can apply the new knowledge when we want to interact in the space (?) in this case cover letters so that we can write a good cover letter—(Rebeca)—mid-point reflections

She shows glimpses of conditional awareness when using letters to the editor, which is helpful to meet specific rhetorical purposes outside the classroom. In her reflections on cover letters, she reports a similar reflection but she is less strategic at applying genre knowledge. Despite the fuzziness, she displays some goal-oriented behavior and awareness of the situations to apply genre knowledge outside the classroom. Our next case, Doris, is more motivated than Rebeca when it comes to using letters to the editor, a reflection that is in agreement with her declarative awareness of genre (unit 2, section 5.2.1.1, unit 22, section 5.2.1.2).

- <sup>(3)</sup> In the case of letters to the editor, the purpose is to give our opinion about a relevant topic. For example, right now I am writing a letter to the editor about a hydroelectric dam project in the Patuca River. *So I feel important to give my opinion about this topic* because this project is going to affect my people and my town... I think I did a good job at expressing my opinion to share with the audience—(Doris)—initial reflections

Doris' motivation to perform within this genre is an important feature in her reflection because she belongs to the Miskito community and she needs to express her personal opinion about the topic. Her willingness to communicate within the genre and the utility of the genre at responding to the situation are considered conditional aspects of Doris' reflection. Doris seems to have stronger affective reasons than Rebeca for using letters to the editor. She shows an instrumental

purpose at using genre knowledge outside the classroom. Initially, Doris reported to have difficulties at analyzing letters to the editor due to lack of prior knowledge (see unit 9, section 5.2.1.1), but she seems to have improved within the genre through the different activities performed in class. Doris has been very reflective about her own progress and has monitored her academic performance frequently, a metacognitive behavior that appears to be consistent in her reflections. Ricardo, our next case, shows instances of an emerging conditional awareness on cover letters and argumentative papers:

- (4) I will try to apply this knowledge in an effective way since it will give a good impression to the readers once I become a teacher (Ricardo)—mid-point reflections
- (5) It is used when the writer tries to convince by means of logical argument; it is used when the main claim has to be supported by evidence and warrants--(Ricardo)—final reflections

He shows a strong willingness to apply cover letters in his professional life, which can be a good indicator of conditional applications beyond the classroom. Despite his intentionality at applying the new knowledge, he does not verbalize sufficiently how he will be using that particular knowledge in an effective manner, as he claims. With regard to argumentative papers, he demonstrates conditional awareness of when argumentative papers should be used and how claims are to be supported. It is important to notice that Ricardo has displayed a good deal of declarative awareness on cover letters and argumentative genres in general (see units 1, 12, 14, & 17, section 5.2.1.1) as well as procedural awareness (units 15, 21, 27, 37, & 43, sections 5.2.2.1 and 5.2.2.2), which can, in our opinion, enhance conditional awareness. José did not report instances of conditional awareness in RRM.s.

Secondary and complementary cases also reveal instances of an inchoate conditional awareness in this sub-category. Initial reflections made on letters to the editor show the following:

- (6) I can use a letter to the editor *when I have an interest that can be common with the community, issues that affect other people or when I want to bring a common solution* – (Rosa)
- (7) This genre *should be applied in the exact moment in which it is necessary for a professional to start an investigation related to a topic affecting the surrounding of the investigator (writer?) or the professional—* (Juan)
- (8) *Because it is important sometimes to let other people know your concerns about a social issue and why you feel affected by it—*(Shirley)

- (9) Also we write the letter to the editor *when we agree or disagree about a controversial topic or issue*—(Whitney)

Through the italicized phrases, we can see learners' actual understanding of letters to the editors' scenes and situations. Very often, learners show a good understanding of the purposes that are fulfilled by using letters to the editor e.g., to propose solutions to a common problem, to start doing research about a topic, to bring about specific concerns or to express agreement or disagreements. In some cases, the learner shows good knowledge of declarative and procedural awareness of genre. For example, Rosa seems to have an appropriate knowledge of genre-based and rhetorical concepts, like scene and language, as embedded in the context (see unit 21 & 24, section 5.2.1.2). Another example is Shirley who displays procedural awareness that seems to be relevant in knowing why and when letters to the editor should be used (see unit 11, section 5.2.2.1). Juan and Whitney did not report instances of declarative or procedural awareness specific to letters to the editor though. Rosa, Juan, Shirley and Whitney also display an emerging conditional awareness of genre, although their verbalization is somewhat general about the conditions in which they would apply their genre knowledge. Such awareness is illustrated as follows:

- (10) *As soon as one has the chance to apply for a job* or in every time we want to present in a paper our skills, competences or everything related to our attitudes for a specific job—(Juan)--
- (11) *You use resumes and cover letters when you are looking or applying for a job or for a new position into a company, school or any other field to work*—(Roberto)
- (12) *When you need to provide supplementary information or information about yourself*—(Shirley)
- (13) *It is used because is the best chance to make a good impression for his employer and it is the opportunity to quickly introduce himself*—(Whitney)

Italicized phrases indicate that most learners seem to be aware of when to apply genre knowledge with respect to cover letters. In most cases, they seem to have a good understanding of declarative and procedural applications of genre that could be beneficial to conditional awareness. In some situations, learners have even managed to overcome difficulties at learning the genre and applying that knowledge into particular situations. Juan, for example, reported declarative awareness of task difficulties with cover letters, but then he transferred this to procedural awareness by using strategies to overcome those difficulties (see units 26 & 36, sections 5.2.1.2, 5.2.2.2). He seems to have evolved from declarative awareness to procedural

awareness in a concrete manner, and shows an intentionality of using this new knowledge in situations beyond the classroom. With respect to the other cases, we observe an evolution at knowing when or why to use the genre to fulfill particular goals outside the classroom, but instances do not provide the required details to account for development of conditional awareness. The following cases give us insights into argumentative papers:

- (14) I can use when facing a struggle with a disrespectful person or somebody that does something which is not fair and I want to persuade him or her to take a different action that benefits everybody. For instance, in the development of my profession as a bilingual teacher, I might find kids with a bad attitude that will complain about life or the way I teach, in that case I could make use of what I have learned. Make a claim supported by evidence and followed by warrants—(Armando)
- (15) *You should apply this genre to argue about something that you are thinking in a different way and at the time that it is appropriate to use it. It shows your point of view.... You should know what you are talking about—(Roberto)*

Armando and Roberto show conditional awareness of argumentative papers to different levels of specificity. Armando shows awareness of using his knowledge of argumentative papers to solve conflictive situations that might appear in his teaching career. Even though he does not provide an example of how he would use claims in support of his arguments, he seems to have recognized that his procedural awareness of argumentative papers (see unit 13, section 5.2.2.1) can help him meet specific rhetorical needs of his own. Roberto, on the other hand, shows conditional awareness relevant to when and how to apply genre knowledge, but he does not make adaptations to situations of his own.

The next sub-category revealed through RRM is applying genre knowledge across academic tasks and contexts. This sub-category holds a total of 22 references in Nvivo, from which 17 were coded through RRM. Doris and José revealed this type of knowledge in the following ways:

- (16) When I am reading a book or magazine I usually use the strategies learned in this class; this type of knowledge can be used in all kinds of texts. *When I am reading, I think of genres, rhetorical situations, etc. I apply the knowledge in different contexts.* For example, few days ago, I wrote an essay so I applied what I have learned, and it was a good essay. It is important to learn something and apply it when you need it. This knowledge is appropriate when we have to read and make reflections, essays, reports, opinions--(Doris)
- (17) These rhetorical appeals show the connection between the writer and the reader. *Our writing will be effective if we know the target audience of our writings—(José)*

In reflection (16), Doris has evolved in a more visible manner from declarative and procedural awareness of genre to a personal and refined way of applying genre knowledge to her interpretation and production of academic texts. She has acquired an understanding of genre analysis as strategies applicable to other writing contexts (and scenes) and seems to have recognized the value of transferring such knowledge to perform tasks in her academic life. This shows potential for conditional awareness and transference of genre knowledge to other contexts. José, on the other hand, showed an interest in adapting his knowledge of rhetorical patterns and awareness of audience into his own academic writing skills from the very beginning. He seems to have acquired a keen understanding of the concept of audience, showing rhetorical flexibility valuable for writing letters to the editor. No instances were found on cover letters in this dataset. In their final reflections—argumentative papers—learners show the following related instances:

- (18) *It is used when there are other theories and the writer has to agree or disagree but with powerful arguments--(Ricardo)*
- (19) *It can be used when you want to give your idea about some important topic—appealing to the emotions of the people--(Doris)*
- (20) *We use argumentation when we write in academic settings in which we are asked to write good arguments--(José)*

We can observe that learners have become aware of when and why they should apply argumentative genres. However, reflections do not show how learners would be adapting their genre knowledge into the new academic scenes flexibly. Learners recognize the value and utility of applying and transferring new genre knowledge to meet requirements across academic tasks and settings, but in most cases they show this awareness in very general ways. Most cases though seem to have refined their declarative and procedural awareness of genre, which can, in our view, be pre-requirements for conditional knowledge of genre. See the following examples:

- (21) *I can use these strategies that I have learned in this genre in different kinds of papers, also for preparing a topic in future classes – (Rosa)—Initial reflections*
- (22) *To establish argument from an investigation of a topic in order to research about it and support ideas to go in contrast or accept what is declared in that investigation-- (Juan)—Final reflections*
- (23) *This could be applied whenever I am assigned to write a particular paper in any class or not only to comply with an academic task but also I could get involved in the world of letters to the editor and begin to publish them in a particular page related to this genre making use of the knowledge just acquired—(Armando)—initial reflections*

Generally, learners seem to be aware of declarative and procedural aspects of genre helpful at transferring genre knowledge across academic tasks. Some examples are Rosa and Armando who have shown a better understanding of how they could transfer their genre knowledge into their own writing in future academic scenes. Juan, on the other hand, seems to be concerned about the purposes of using arguments in support of academic requirements, but it is difficult to account for selective and flexible use of genre-based knowledge in his case.

### 5.2.3.2 Findings on reflective journals

With reference to conditional awareness applied to rhetorical situations beyond the classroom, there are only three instances in RJs. One of them is provided by Doris:

- (24) I had written a résumé before, but now I have realized how to write a good résumé and cover letter to impress or to ensure a good job, *actually I have practiced all the knowledge that I have acquired*. For example, *I used the scene, rhetorical patterns*, among others--(Doris)

Through this reflection, Doris shows transfer of declarative (see units 5 & 22, section 5.2.1.1) and procedural awareness (see unit 12, section 5.2.2.1). Her declarative awareness of scenes of writing and understanding of cover letters' rhetorical function are significant in her declared conditional awareness of cover letters. She also shows a great deal of strategic thinking in writing cover letters in her procedural reflections. Despite this, she does not provide further details as to how she has used her genre knowledge in writing a good résumé and cover letter. This is why showing how this knowledge has been transferred into real interpretation and production of texts becomes important. Juan shows an emerging conditional awareness in the following way:

- (25) I am going to apply the paper [cover letter?]next time.... The cover letter is necessary to use it when we know that the workplace is a bilingual situation —(Juan)

Juan seems to be less strategic than Doris at applying genre knowledge because of his lack of details when specifying strategies. However, he seems to have a strong motivation for applying his new knowledge across bilingual settings in the future. As observed in other cases, there is not a clear visualization of how he would be using his knowledge to approach cover letters in these settings, though.

Five instances were coded on RJs pertaining to conditional awareness applied to academic contexts. Again, Doris shows awareness of this type of knowledge by applying genre-based knowledge and strategies acquired in class to comply with academic requirements in other contexts:

- (26) At this time, I notice how important is this class because with the strategies and tools given to us, *I practice in other classes*. For example, I did an essay in the curriculum course and the teacher congratulated me because *I followed all the things that I have been learning*—(Doris)

Other complementary cases confirm emerging conditional awareness as previously found. They show interest and motivation in applying genre knowledge and strategies to write papers in other academic scenes, to teach their future students or to approach writing tasks in the L1.

- (27) *I'll apply this knowledge* to write my papers with the correct rhetorical appeals *but it depends on the topic*—(Rosa)
- (28) As a future teacher *I will teach it [APA style] to my students because it is a useful strategy in order to organize the paper*—(Rocio)
- (29) *I should apply this style [APA style] when we work in whatever report in English or Spanish*. This style is going to help me a lot in all my writing tasks. This is a very important part of writing reports—(Juan)

### 5.2.3.3 Summary of findings on conditional genre awareness

In general, RRM s seem to be more effective at capturing instances of conditional awareness than RJs, because of the number of instances captured through them. Results show that most learners reveal glimpses of conditional awareness. However, learners need to show more selectivity and flexibility in the application of strategies when approaching genre-based tasks. Very often, they know the situations in which a particular genre can be applied and the rhetorical purpose(s) or actions that can be fulfilled at performing within that genre. Yet learners lack the nuances to describe how that particular knowledge can be applied to meet specific goals or how the new knowledge can be adapted to meet particular needs.

In addition, learners demonstrate a great deal of rhetorical understanding at this point. Most learners show transfer of declarative and procedural awareness to their conditional awareness to varying degrees. See, for example, cases like Doris, Ricardo, Juan, Armando and Rosa. Motivation appears to be a determinant factor in enhancing conditional genre awareness.



Some cases, like Doris, Ricardo and Armando, show visible instances of conditional awareness that can be associated to their motivation to fulfill a particular rhetorical need within the genre.

Besides declarative and procedural awareness, psychological factors like recognizing the value of the genre to fulfill a particular rhetorical need seem to be relevant in developing conditional genre awareness (see Jacobs et al, 1983 on utility and functional value of strategies). In addition, learners seem knowledgeable of the situations in which they can use their genre knowledge and the purposes they can fulfill when using it. In most cases an interaction among three types of knowledge, declarative, procedural and conditional, is perceived with a stronger fluctuation between procedural and conditional awareness.

With regard to findings on conditional awareness across academic tasks and contexts, we observe a great deal of understanding of genre-based concepts and strategies and an intentionality of applying genre knowledge to fulfill academic goals. In some cases like Doris, Rosa and Armando, this intentionality as well as experiences of transferring genre knowledge to other contexts has become visible. Generally, learners recognize the value of genre-based knowledge and show a great deal of motivation in applying it in other contexts, especially when there is an academic need to fulfill (similar to the previous sub-category). These factors are considered important for developing conditional awareness. Nevertheless, most learners are not strategic enough at adapting the new knowledge to the demands of tasks across contexts and situations or at least they do not verbalize this sufficiently.

Conditional genre awareness in novice learners does not seem to increment across genre-based tasks, it rather seems to be conditioned by the task itself, its context and other factors. One of those factors is the learner's personal need to fulfill a particular rhetorical or academic goal within a genre, another one is the value the learners give to the new genre knowledge in order to fulfill a specific goal, and a third one is the learner's motivation to use the newly acquired genre knowledge to perform academic tasks.

## 5.3 Related findings

### 5.3.1 Monitoring cognitive performance

This category emerged naturally in our data and was therefore coded as a complementary category of analysis. According to our data, *monitoring cognitive performance* refers to the learners' awareness of having difficulties with a genre-based task or performance in general. In some cases, this awareness also involves the realization of having to apply strategic knowledge to overcome those difficulties in different ways. Recognizing a cognitive failure seems to activate metacognitive monitoring. Some learners seem to be more successful at applying self-monitoring than others; however, while some are more strategic upon solving problems, others are more dependent on the teacher's scaffolding. This category holds a total of 39 references in Nvivo. It highly interacts with declarative, procedural and conditional awareness, in particular declarative awareness of task difficulty.

#### 5.3.1.1 Findings on reflective response matrices

Two instances were found indicating metacognitive monitoring in RRM. They are:

- <sup>(1)</sup> *Before I received this course, writing the essay about letters to the editor was a difficult task because letters to the editor sometimes are controversial, so I followed some steps: read the information twice, then I did some research through Internet, books, magazines, etc.* (Doris)
- <sup>(2)</sup> *I had to solve some unusual situations for me, first of all I had never been a reader to letters to the editor, so I confused letters to the editor with editorials— Another situation was to write the claim, how can I write a powerful claim?* (Rosa)

In both cases, the learners have identified a task difficulty or the possible root of the problem. Doris has attributed the problem to the nature of the genre and has managed to select strategies to solve the problem herself. She shows some effortful and strategic behavior at attempting to repair the difficulties found at writing the genre analysis paper on letters to the editor. Rosa, on the other hand, has become aware of difficulties at distinguishing two related genres such as letters to the editors and editorial, but she has not succeeded in selecting possible strategies to solve the problem.

### 5.3.1.2 Findings on Reflective Journals

RJs captured most instances of metacognitive monitoring with 37 coded references. Rebeca, for

example, declares the following:

- <sup>(3)</sup> I think it is difficult for us because we need to practice more when we see a new topic. I would like that the teacher gave us an example first and then she practiced with us....I think it will help us a lot, but I know we need more time and practice--(Rebeca)—about letters to the editor
- <sup>(4)</sup> When I was doing this genre (cover letter and résumé), I felt better because I think I learned better and I understood all the concepts that the teacher gave us. I didn't feel frustrated like when we did the first genre analysis--letter to the editor--perhaps I have more grammar knowledge and I need to practice that. I hope to continue learning--(Rebeca)

Rebeca appears to have gone through a transitional stage in her metacognitive performance. First, she realizes that she had difficulties writing the genre analysis paper on letters to the editor and as a strategy she requests more help from the teacher. In the next reflection, she monitors and evaluates her learning progress more positively and recognizes that she has improved her grammar. In both cases, Rebeca shows dependence on the teacher and classroom help as the main cognitive resources, but does not show activation of strategic behavior to minimize the difficulties encountered. These types of learners show some degree of metacognitive monitoring, but they do not seem to be conscious of what kind of strategies are the most effective to fix the problem. Thus, they do not seem to be strategic enough to self-regulate their own learning. See another example:

- <sup>(5)</sup> One thing that continues giving me problems is APA style—it's not all the things it is just the cover page, I don't know how to do it—(Roberto)

These types of learners have been identified as *low-monitoring learners*. Low-monitoring learners rely for the most part on scaffolding support provided by the teacher or other more capable learners. They tend to be insecure and less strategic towards approaching their reading and writing tasks. Conversely, some other learners show more commitment, effortful behavior or higher self-confidence when monitoring their performance, see for example Doris, Ricardo and Juan:

- <sup>(6)</sup> *I notice how much I have been improving in this reading and writing course.* I compared what I wrote at the beginning of the course and how I write now; I can see my progress through my writing; now I

feel more comfortable doing the analysis. It's becoming easier to follow the guidelines. It does not mean that it is easy to read, analyze and write, but *I feel more confident now*--(Doris)

- (7) Though I continue struggling with this, I am trying to acquire how the genre is involved with reading and writing and I am trying to figure it out--(Ricardo)
- (8) The strategy I am using [to understand APA style] is to look at the back of some books to understand better—(Juan)

All of the three learners, if compared to Rebeca and Roberto, seem to have a higher degree of awareness about task difficulties as well as the need to exert some extra effort to improve such difficulties by themselves. Sometimes, similar to conditional awareness, learners do not specify the strategies they are applying at overcoming cognitive constraints like Ricardo, for example. In most cases, reflections can overlap with awareness of task difficulty or procedural awareness to perform genre analysis tasks or to write effectively within the genre. Students with a higher ability to monitor themselves, higher strategic behavior, and a sense of confidence at performing genre-based tasks, have been identified as *high-monitoring learners*. These types of learners can also show a high degree of motivation and interest in their learning progress despite identifying cognitive constraints, an attribute that indicates a higher degree of maturity when monitoring cognitive performance.

- (9) *I am happy because I am learning*; moreover, I enjoy every moment that Mrs Aleyda Linares corrects me because it is in that way that I can learn more every day—(Rocio)
- (10) It is still difficult because I have found that there are many styles of writing references. *I'm planning to keep practicing and to look for more examples* about the use of APA—(Juan)
- (11) *I know that I have problems organizing my ideas, but since I have been doing this course I can see that I am improving*. Sometimes, it is frustrating to think and think, I get headaches, but when Ms. Aleyda says that I am improving, I feel good and I say to myself, "It's worth it to me." – (Doris)

### 5.3.1.3 Summary of findings on monitoring cognitive performance

In general, RJs proved to be more resourceful at collecting instances of monitoring cognitive performance than RRM. This category is less recurrent than other categories pertaining metacognitive knowledge with a total of 39 references. We find that this category reveals very important findings concerning learners' development of metacognitive genre awareness. The most revealing insight is that novice learners do seem to apply metacognitive monitoring when performing complex genre-based tasks and academic tasks in general. Most cases seem to notice

the task difficulty or the root of the problem, and to varying degrees, the strategies to repair the cognitive failure. However, learners vary in the ways they apply genre-based or general strategies to solve the problem. Some of the learners, instead, are more strategic since they show a higher sense of confidence and higher levels of motivation when monitoring their cognitive performance. These learners tend to be more effective at choosing action plans to repair cognitive failures by themselves. These have been identified as *high-monitoring learners*. *Low-monitoring learners*, on the other hand, show awareness of monitoring cognitive performance but they are less strategic at solving difficulties and therefore rely frequently on the teacher's scaffolding as the main cognitive resource in the classroom.

#### **5.4 Results on MAI scores**

MAI test scores show that  $M = 192$  and  $SD = 24.7$ ; these are based on a maximum score of 260 points. Scores on the KC factor obtained  $M = 65$  and  $SD = 8.8$  from a maximum of 85 points (see table 5.1 below for results on the total MAI and KC factor pre- and post-test scores). We did not include scores on the regulation of cognition (RC) factor because our main interest was on the total MAI and KC scores. As explained in Chapter 4, results on the MAI are interpreted on the basis of the total points obtained: the higher the score, the higher metacognitive awareness attributed to the student. If we look at the mean score, however, students show that they have relatively low scores suggesting low levels of metacognitive awareness. Scores on the KC factor show similar results as those obtained in the total MAI.

Direct observation of individual scores show that Armando reported a score of 149 obtaining the lowest metacognitive score whereas Rebeca obtained the highest with 227. Another student with a high score in the total MAI is Doris with 227 points. According to this, results on the MAI questionnaire do not seem to be in relationship with the learners' language proficiency as measured in the study since advanced learners such as Armando scored rather low in comparison to lower learners such as Rebeca and Doris (basic and intermediate learners correspondingly) who performed comparatively higher at the beginning of the study.

Final results on the MAI show  $M = 197.6$  and  $SD = 16.8$  for the total MAI scores;  $M = 66.3$  and  $SD = 5.0$  for KC. We did not apply inferential statistical analysis due to the small number of participants in the study. Consequently, we did not interpret differences between pre-

and post-test scores in terms of changes or development. Therefore, no conclusions are drawn concerning learners' development of general metacognitive knowledge. Our main interest on using MAI scores was to characterize the student population in terms of general metacognitive awareness rather than generalize findings. In general, we can see that L2 learners in the context of the TEFL program at the UPNFM seem to be metacognitively low. See table 5.2 for a summary of results on MAI and KC pre-test and post-test scores.

**Table 5.2** Total MAI and Knowledge of Cognition (KC) pre-test and post-test scores.

<b>Student</b>	<b>MAI1</b>	<b>KC1</b>	<b>MAI2</b>	<b>KC2</b>
Roberto	206	72	196	64
Juan	174	64	184	67
José	200	67	212	72
Rebeca	227	76	212	68
Ricardo	163	56	205	61
Zulema	200	66	203	71
Rosa	185	58	202	63
Armando	149	48	182	64
Rocio	200	68	186	61
Doris	221	73	214	73
Whitney	163	55	160	59
Shirley	213	75	216	73

## 5.5 Summary of overall findings

Our findings suggest that learners develop metacognitive awareness of genre in each of the different sub-components to varying degrees. All learners developed a great deal of declarative and procedural genre awareness, but demonstrated that they were more productive in their procedural or strategic awareness. In addition, most learners showed emerging conditional awareness with only a few cases of concrete applications across tasks.

In our data, three different but related declarative sub-categories emerged: Awareness of concepts relevant to task and learning, awareness of the task and learning context, and awareness of the self as a learner or cognitive agent. Learners become aware of the overarching concepts of genre, scene, and situation applied to the analysis and interpretation of texts as well as rhetorical aspects of academic communication. Commonly, when reflecting upon the task, learners mostly reflect upon difficulties in performing genre-based tasks or the importance of the task. We

observed that in certain cases awareness of task difficulty triggered learners' metacognitive self-monitoring. In addition, learners constantly reflect upon themselves as cognitive agents.

Procedural genre awareness was the most frequent category in our data. Five sub-categories were identified, but three of them were recurrent throughout the sets of data: Awareness of strategies to fulfill rhetorical purposes within a genre, awareness of strategies to perform genre-analysis tasks, and awareness of strategies to write effectively within the genre. Data results show that learners apply strategic awareness in different ways, but frequently they lack specificity at reporting strategies. Some of the most common strategies applied are analyzing the scene, identifying and describing the rhetorical situation, reading about and collecting samples of the genre, using rhetorical appeals and knowledge of the audience to write the genre effectively, and using appropriate language and vocabulary to write within the genre. Some learners show to be more resourceful at solving task difficulties by applying genre-based strategies by themselves or using independent strategies such as researching on the Web, re-reading the chapters on the text, or looking for additional samples of the genre. Conversely, less strategic learners seem to rely on the teacher or classroom feedback as their main cognitive resources to solve difficulties with the task. This finding is in close relationship with the learners' ability to monitor cognitive performance.

Data show that conditional awareness reveals two sub-categories: Applying genre knowledge to fulfill rhetorical needs beyond the classroom and applying genre knowledge to meet requirements across academic tasks and contexts, both of them in high interaction with procedural awareness of genre. When reporting conditional awareness, novice learners show difficulties in verbalizing their knowledge. It appears that novice learners are not sufficiently aware of how they can use genre knowledge across rhetorical and/or academic contexts in a flexible and selective manner. Having a high degree of motivation and intentionality to apply the new knowledge, recognizing the value of the new knowledge in fulfilling rhetorical or academic needs, and the learners' personal needs are some of the factors identified as being relevant to developing conditional awareness of genre.

Novice learners do seem to monitor their genre-based performance and learning in general. In fact, most of them are able to identify task difficulty and, to a different degree, they identify strategies that can be useful for solving those difficulties. For these reasons, monitoring cognitive performance seems to be in high interaction with declarative awareness of task

difficulties and procedural awareness of genre. The variable *task difficulty* has been assumed to inhibit learning, but in some cases it has been found to trigger metacognitive self-monitoring. Strategic learners have a higher sense of confidence at applying their own strategies and seem to be more motivated towards their own learning or learning in general. They seem to be more effective at choosing action plans to solve difficulties; therefore, they have been identified as *high-monitoring learners*. Less strategic learners, on the other hand, rely heavily on external resources such as the teacher's help to overcome task difficulties and do not seem to be very resourceful at seeking out strategies of their own to repair cognitive failures. These learners have been identified as *low-monitoring learners*.





## **Chapter 6**

### **Findings on metacognitive genre awareness in the development of critical reading skills**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter reports the findings on the research question about how metacognitive genre awareness contributes to learners' critical reading of argumentative genres in English. It is our assumption, in alignment with Negretti and Kuteeva (2011), that metacognitive genre awareness contributes to L2 learners' analysis and interpretation of academic texts. To account for transfer of metacognitive genre awareness and therefore learning into critical reading of argumentative genres, we relied on quantitative and qualitative sources of data. Again, quantitative analyses were done to supplement qualitative analyses. Due to the extensive details that are to be given on the qualitative aspects of learners' learning, results are provided on four representative cases chosen at random to facilitate the analyses.

#### **6.2 Results on qualitative data**

This section is based on the analysis of genre analysis papers and comparison of metacognitive reflections of four representative cases: Rebeca, Doris, Ricardo and José. These cases were chosen because of their representativeness of TEFL learners at the UPNFM in terms of gender, socio-cultural, linguistic and personality traits. They are two females and two males and they display basic, low-intermediate and high-intermediate levels of proficiency according to MEPT testing. Third, they showed different personality traits, some of them were extrovert and active in class while others were quiet. Doris belongs to the Miskito community and therefore represents students who are characterized by a differentiated linguistic and cultural background in the UPNFM.

The analysis was primarily carried out on three genre analysis papers per representative case, making a total of 12 papers. In our approach, genre analysis papers are a fundamental part of genre-based tasks and consist of analyzing and reporting generic features on each of the argumentative genres studied in class. Genre-analysis tasks were carried out on several samples

of the genre to enhance learners' understanding and critical reading within that particular genre. Learners were required to investigate or to apply ethnographic strategies, as suggested by the approach, to make as many generalizations as possible about the genre under study. For this purpose, learners were provided with genre-analysis guidelines and strategies to perform the tasks. At first, learners showed some confusion about reporting findings on particular samples of genres due to the novelty of the task. To enhance clarity and understanding of the task, a great deal of feedback and examples were provided in class. Learners were also supported with additional training to write genre analysis papers given their lack of expertise. They were provided with conventions and academic techniques in order to organize, structure and present their analysis papers appropriately. Learners also distinguished between analysis papers and the traditional five-paragraph essay in academic settings.

To operationalize the analysis, we started reading the genre analysis papers several times. When something striking, useful or relevant was read that linked the data with the theoretical framework, comments were written that would help to identify patterns. Remarks were also written out to show the value of the assignment and its relevance to demonstrate the learners' ability to analyze academic texts within a genre-based perspective. All of the information was properly organized and digitized in organizational charts. The next step in the analysis was the elaboration of three different matrices, one per task, to summarize the generic features identified by each of the learners in each of the papers. The matrices were elaborated on by taking into account the genre-analysis procedure followed in class, which consisted of conceptualizing genre and identifying the rhetorical situation (showing awareness of context), identifying and describing the rhetorical patterns (awareness of form), and interpreting those features and patterns (thinking critically about the genre).

Each of the sections consist of several other features. The section of genre and rhetorical situation includes the features of scene, genre, and situation and components of the rhetorical situation (setting, subject, participants, and purpose). The section of identifying and describing rhetorical patterns includes the features of content, format, structure, rhetorical appeals, sentence, and diction. For the section of interpreting features and patterns some of the highlighted features are beliefs, values or knowledge shared/needed to participate within the genre, people invited and excluded from participating within the genre, participants' roles, attitudes or behavior encouraged through the genre, attitudes towards the reader, and the world, among others.

After reading the papers carefully, features were counted and entered in their corresponding matrix. Then, those features were added up to obtain the total number of features per genre and participant. In that manner, we could obtain a general impression of learners' performance on genre analysis and establish some comparisons among themselves within each of the genres. Finally, a general matrix was elaborated on the features per participants across all of the genres (see appendix J). Through this, we could observe aspects like who included the lowest or highest number of features per genre or in which genres participants had performed best or worst. After organizing and visualizing the data on the matrices, we applied in-depth analysis of relevant generic features to account for transfer of metacognitive genre awareness into critical reading of each of the genres studied in class. To complete the analysis, findings on learners' critical reading were compared with learners' reflections to see the ways in which they demonstrated agreement between findings on metacognitive genre awareness and actual critical reading of argumentative genres. In this way we could guarantee triangulation of results (see also quantitative results on critical reading test scores).

### 6.2.1 Critical reading of letters to the editor

In the analysis of genre analysis papers on letters to the editor, José obtained the highest number of features with 42, followed by Ricardo with 36, Doris with 20, and Rebeca with 10. See table 6.1 below for a detailed description on genre features per representative case.

**Table 6.1** Genre features on letters to the editor per representative case

No.	Genre analysis procedure	Genre feature	Number of instances per student				Instances per genre feature
			Rebeca	Ricardo	Doris	José	
1.	Conceptualizing genre/ Identifying the scene and describing the rhetorical situation (Awareness of context)	Scene and genre	1	2	3	3	9
		Setting	1	1	1	2	5
		Subject	1	1	2	1	5
		Participants	2	5	1	5	13
		Purposes	1	1	2	1	5
2.	Identifying and describing rhetorical patterns (Awareness of form)	Content	-	3	2	2	7
		Format	1	3	1	1	6
		Structure	-	1	-	1	2
		Rhetorical appeals	1	1	-	4	6
		Sentence	1	1	1	3	6
		Diction	-	3	-	3	6
		Others	-	2	1	2	5

3.	Interpreting features and patterns (Thinking critically about the genre)	Beliefs and values of writers and readers	1	7	1	5	14
		People invited and excluded within the genre	-	1	1	1	3
		Values, beliefs, goals and assumptions encouraged within the genre	-	-	1	1	2
		Treatment of subject and importance of content	-	1	-	-	1
		Attitudes towards the readers and the world	-	2	-	2	4
		Actions made possible or restrained by the genre	-	1	3	2	6
		Others				3	3
		<b>Total of features per participant</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>108</b>

In general, results show that learners have acquired a great deal of genre-based features regarding analysis of the rhetorical situation, especially those related to the analysis of the participants (readers and writers). With respect to rhetorical patterns, learners show greater understanding of content, rhetorical appeals, sentence and diction, and to a lower degree, discourse features (e.g., tone) and structure. In reference to interpretation of rhetorical patterns, learners often analyze beliefs, values and knowledge shared or needed to participate within the genre as well as actions made possible or restrained when using the genre.

Data show that José is the most productive learner in this task with a number of approximately 12 features about genre and the rhetorical situation, 16 features on rhetorical patterns and 14 on interpretation of patterns. He shows a great deal of awareness of rhetorical patterns from which rhetorical appeals—Logos, Ethos and Pathos—are key generic features in his analysis of letters to the editor:

<sup>(1)</sup> In this type of genre we can find three rhetorical appeals, which are logos that appeals to the rational mind, logical reasoning, arguments and evidence; Ethos is based on making the audience believe on what the writer states because of his experience in the field, the expertise or his/her position within the field; Pathos

appeals to the emotions, the writer wants the audience feel a sort of empathy, whether it is happiness, sadness, anger or any other emotion (Wida & Stolley, 2010) – cited by student

He applies awareness of rhetorical appeals as a strategy to understand the argumentative nature of letters to the editor, which is in agreement with findings on declarative awareness (see example 6, section 5.2.1.1) and procedural awareness to write effectively within the genre (see example 18, section 5.2.2.1). In terms of conditional awareness, he demonstrates understanding of how rhetorical strategies (in this case rhetorical appeals) should be used to adapt writing to the target audience. In our view, this suggests rhetorical flexibility that reveals José's understanding of writing as a social act and an acute awareness of audience. This knowledge indicates conditional thinking and is found to be in agreement with reports on conditional awareness (see example 17, section 5.2.3.1).

- (2) ...knowing who is our reader is fundamental, because this will help us to write our paper, for instance, educational level, social status, and the origin....The rhetorical appeals are the ones that cause a reaction of change in the reader according to what the writer suggests

In the next example, he applies conditional awareness by suggesting flexibility at adapting the writer's language style—tone—to the audience depending on the following factors:

- (3) The writer decides what kind of tone he/she wants to present in order to convince the audience, aggressive, irritated, joyful, happy, excited or soft spoken depending on the nature of the topic and how involved is the writer with it

José's critical reading of letters to the editor also reveals a very good understanding and application of genre analysis strategies, which indicates procedural awareness. In addition to this, he shows awareness of language as discourse as well as critical awareness. See for example:

- (4) In order to learn to analyze letters to the editor, we have to take into account the scene, the patterns of genre, and give an interpretation of the situation and the patterns....by taking this into account writers can have an effective and powerful impact in the audience
- (5) The structures of the sentences also tell us how good or intelligible the writer is at writing: These sentences have to be clear, they have to be connected as a chain to make sense to the reader
- (6) Letters to the editor can be written by everybody, but it does not mean that many citizens do it,...the question is why does this happen? Is it because not all people are able to write them? No it is not, it is because sometimes people just do not care about what is going on in society

All in all, José displays awareness of genre in the three forms and seems to apply this knowledge in his interpretation of letters to the editor appropriately. Despite a substantial number of features reported by him, he sometimes lacks the details to support his claims. This problem has been found to be a pattern in most of the genre-analysis papers across learners. It was observed though, that as learners became acquainted with genre analysis and aspects of academic writing, they gradually made efforts to use evidence to support their claims.

Ricardo shows a great deal of awareness of generic features in his interpretation of letters to the editor with 10 features about genre and the rhetorical situation, 16 about rhetorical patterns, and approximately 12 about interpretation of patterns. Particularly, he demonstrates declarative awareness about the role of the participants in describing the rhetorical situation. In addition, he shows awareness of content, format, and diction as well as awareness of beliefs, values and knowledge shared by the participants in his interpretation of patterns.

- <sup>(7)</sup> As we know, letters to the editor are presented to people about topics of national interest...the writer appeals to the rational criticism of readers, who have some kind of participation, preoccupation or involvement with the topic

In his interpretation, Ricardo applies knowledge of rhetorical patterns in strategic ways to suggest how to write effective letters to the editor as shown by the following example:

- <sup>(8)</sup> ...structure and format are as important as the scene, situation and rhetorical appeals. The writer has to be very careful because the first appearance is very important to call the attention of the reader—the headline must be attractive using controlling ideas in a creative way that the readers must appreciate—and the writer must have a clear idea about the topic

Similarly to José, Ricardo uses declarative awareness of rhetorical appeals—logos, ethos, pathos— and awareness of audience strategically. He is especially aware of the importance of ethos in order to appeal to the audience in a convincing way:

- <sup>(9)</sup> ...the way the writer presents himself is a good signal since this helps to build a better relationship with the readers; the writer's background help the readers construct an image about him/her, considering whether he/she is a serious person in his/her way of communicating or by taking into account previously written material

Ricardo not only shows awareness of rhetorical appeals as strategies but also understanding of writing as a social and rhetorical act. In particular, he seems to be aware of the importance of building a credible and respectful image as a writer in order to establish a truthful relationship

with the readers. In addition, Ricardo seems to use conditional awareness of linguistic features such as diction or language style, that is, depending on the reader and the topics to be discussed, although no examples are shown.

- <sup>(10)</sup> Readers expect a very good diction from the writer according to the levels of complexity of the topic. Language style has a strong influence on the reader and it will depend on the role the writer wants the readers to play or develop.

Finally, Ricardo suggests application of genre critique when analyzing the possibilities of being excluded from participation within letters to the editor. Genre critique is an important component of our genre-awareness approach and therefore attempts to critique values, beliefs and ideologies portrayed by genres are highly encouraged. See for example,

- <sup>(11)</sup> Some readers can be excluded from analyzing the information, interacting with it and presenting solutions if a high level of vocabulary is used or if topics relate to beliefs or ideology; for example, ideologies belonging to political parties

In our view, Ricardo has been able to apply a great deal of declarative, procedural, and to a lesser extent, conditional awareness in his analysis of letters to the editor. We observe again a lack of nuance in describing features, especially when it comes to conditional applications of genre. Ricardo's analysis is in agreement with declarative and procedural reflections as reported in Chapter 5 (see examples 1, section 5.2.1.1; example 18, section 5.2.1.2; example 25, section 5.2.2.1). His productivity in analyzing letters to the editor seems to be in agreement with his language proficiency level and academic reading skills as reported earlier in the chapter. In addition to this, Ricardo reported a high level of cognitive monitoring because of his strong motivation and commitment to improving academic performance (see example 7, section 5.3.1.2, Chapter 5). For this reason, he has been identified as a *high-monitoring learner*.

The next case is Doris. She reports a number of nine features in describing genre and rhetorical situation, five in identifying and describing rhetorical patterns, and six in interpreting patterns. In this task, she displays high declarative awareness of genre, scene and situation as well as interpretation of patterns, particularly at describing actions made possible or restrained by the genre.

- <sup>(12)</sup> To understand better this genre, I read some letters to the editor and I realized that the common topics are related to the interests of the citizens; for example, in one opinion I found it was a debate and in another



one, it was in favor of social security. I could realize that all of these opinions are critiques, information or reflections and for this reason, they are written through newspapers or online sites.

We can observe her using phrases like *I read some...., I realized that common topics...., or I found it was....* In our view, these lexical features reveal the learner's appropriation of her new role as genre analyst and researcher. This awareness is useful in the development of strategies to analyze academic texts from a critical perspective. Doris first applies her knowledge of genre-analysis strategies to understand the genre and components of the rhetorical situation(s). She realizes important rhetorical aspects, such as subject matter commonly treated within the genre, the nature of the genre, settings, participants, and situations. Besides displaying declarative knowledge, she applies critical thinking in order to interpret the value of letters to the editor in Honduran society and its possibilities for citizens to express their opinions:

<sup>(13)</sup> After reading some of these opinions, I realize that people who write them are common citizens that they write by making some claims or trying to raise awareness on other people; most of the time these opinions are about things happening around us or things that writers do not agree with...this genre is highly political, I think for this reason is highly controversial

<sup>(14)</sup> Letters to the editor are the voice of people; for example, in my country Honduras is not easy to say what we think, it means that for some writers this is a route to say what they think

All in all, Doris reveals genre critique at interpreting possible exclusions in using this genre due to ideological beliefs—similar to Ricardo—by pointing to a personal experience about reading samples of the genre, yet she does not provide further details to support this. In the next excerpt (15), however, she interprets the nature of the genre and qualities that writers and the article must share when responding to it:

<sup>(15)</sup> There are some topics that exclude the readers, for example, topics associated with the political environment. I felt excluded reading an article about politics from La Tribuna

<sup>(16)</sup> Sometimes letters to the editor can be very controversial, but finally they contain opinions that common citizens make, of course, in a topic in which they have the knowledge

In addition, Doris analyzes rhetorical patterns with respect to language, something that suggests conditional awareness at indicating variations of language according to the topic, but again, no examples are provided:

<sup>(17)</sup> ...the language can be informative, but sometimes [it] can be offensive if the opinion is a critique. I think it depends on the topic

Generally, Doris displays a great deal of declarative awareness in her analysis of letters to the editors, but very little procedural and conditional awareness. This weakness probably reflects her initial struggle at analyzing and writing the analysis paper on letters to the editor reported in declarative awareness of task. She points at the lack of experience at reading and writing from a genre-based perspective as the main cause of her initial task difficulties (see example 10, section 5.2.1.1). It is possible that her relatively few generic features (compared to José and Ricardo) and scarce procedural and conditional awareness are due to her initial problems at managing the task on letters to the editor. An approximation to conditional awareness was found in her reports on metacognitive genre awareness in her commitment to use letters to the editors to express her opinions about issues that affect the Miskito community (see example 3, section 5.2.3.1). This finding, in our view, is relevant to apply conditional awareness because it reflects the motivation and willingness of the learner to use genre-based knowledge in real-life contexts. Despite Doris' difficulties, she has shown gradual improvement in her learning process as revealed in her reflections on monitoring cognitive performance (see example 1, section 5.3.1.1). Her personal commitment and motivation for improving her reading and writing skills led us to classify her as a *high-monitoring learner* (see examples 6 & 11, section 5.3.1.2).

We now analyze Rebeca who is the least productive learner in this task with a total of 10 features. She reports six features in her analysis of genre and rhetorical situation, three in rhetorical patterns, and one in interpretation of patterns. She applies greater declarative awareness at analyzing genre, scene, situation and aspects of the rhetorical situation. This finding is in agreement with Rebeca's reports on declarative awareness of key genre-based concepts (see example 7, section 5.2.1.1; example 19, section 5.2.1.2). She seems to be more comfortable with her role of genre analyst and researcher at this point when developing genre-analysis tasks, which connects to procedural awareness. In the next excerpt, she summarizes findings on textual patterns and aspects of the rhetorical situation in a declarative manner:

<sup>(18)</sup> Patterns in letters to the editor in the different scenarios are similar. For example, writers can be multiple, the language used is formal, and most of the issues are social and political problems. The writer's purpose is to convince, persuade or find consensus to elevate his/her voice so that it can be heard by people

She reveals awareness of the rhetorical situation – scene, purpose, role of the writer - and rhetorical appeals as strategies to write convincing letters to the editor in accordance with reports

on procedural awareness to perform genre analysis tasks (see example 9, section 5.2.2.1, Chapter 5)

- (19) We realized that the rhetorical appeals used in this genre are similar in different scenes in which we find it. According to our analysis, we found that the writer always uses evidence to convince people about their ideas or complaints. Sometimes they use logos, ethos, and pathos. For example, the writer shows his audience that he is a credible source and is worth listening to, in this case he uses Ethos. To use Logos, they use facts, statistics, and certain authorities on the subject.

In the final excerpt though, we find instances of rhetorical flexibility when she recognizes that topics within the genre may vary. This is relevant to conditional awareness.

- (20) most common topics of this genre may vary. For example, I found in newspaper La Tribuna (a local paper in Honduras) a few letters to the editor with different themes. They can be social problems, poverty, political issues and education in Honduras, such as lack of schools. This depends on the issues covered by the newspaper. They are usually problems organized about a common solution.

In general, Rebeca applies declarative awareness of concepts and strategies in the analysis of letters to the editor to a great extent. She also shows awareness of genre-based concepts, aspects of the rhetorical situation and rhetorical patterns at writing letters in a strategic manner. With reference to conditional knowledge, she shows a few instances in her understanding of topics and participants within the genre. In her initial reflections on declarative awareness of the self, Rebeca reported to have had problems in understanding the key concepts of genre, scene and situation. She kept requesting additional help in order to be able to apply these concepts in real life examples and to apply genre analysis strategies in general. For these reasons, she was identified as a *low-monitoring learner*. Nevertheless, she pointed out her improvement when doing additional exercises in class and receiving support from the teacher (see example 28, section 5.2.1.2; example 4, section 5.3.1.2). We can observe this in her effective application of concepts and strategies throughout her analysis. She applies procedural and conditional awareness to a certain extent, but her production in the number of features is very limited.

## 6.2.2 Critical reading of cover letters and résumés

Regarding critical reading of cover letters and résumés, we observe a similar pattern to that of the previous task with respect to number of features identified by learners. José is again the most productive readers and analyst with a number of 33 features, followed by Ricardo with 32, Doris

with 30, and Rebeca with 22 features (see table 6.2 and matrix on appendix J for more details). However, it can be noted that Doris and Rebeca have improved in their analyses of texts.

**Table 6.2** Genre features on cover letters and résumés per representative case

No.	Genre analysis procedure	Genre feature	Number of instances per student				Instances per genre feature
			Rebeca	Ricardo	Doris	José	
1.	Conceptualizing genre/ Identifying the scene and describing the rhetorical situation (Awareness of context)	Scene and genre	2	1	3	4	10
		Setting	1	1	-	1	3
		Subject	1	1	1	1	4
		Participants	2	2	1	2	7
		Purposes	2	2	2	2	8
2.	Identifying and describing rhetorical patterns (Awareness of form)	Content	1	3	2	2	8
		Format	1	5	3	4	13
		Structure	1	2	3	2	8
		Rhetorical appeals	3	2	-	2	7
		Sentence	1	2	2	1	6
		Diction	-	1	-	1	2
		Others	-	1	-	1	2
3.	Interpreting features and patterns (Thinking critically about the genre)	Beliefs and values of writers and readers	2	1	3	1	7
		People invited and excluded within the genre	1	1	1	1	4
		Values, beliefs, goals and assumptions encouraged within the genre	1	1	2	3	7
		Treatment of subject and importance of content	1	2	2	1	6
		Attitudes towards the readers and the world	-	-	2	1	3
		Actions made possible or restrained by the genre	2	3	2	3	10
		Others	-	1	1	-	2
		<b>Total of features per participant</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>117</b>

Learners this time show a greater number of features about genre, scene and situation, purpose and role of the participants when analyzing the genre and rhetorical situation. In terms of rhetorical patterns, learners report more awareness of features such as content, format and structure. And regarding interpretation of patterns, they show awareness of features on actions made possible or restrained by the genre, participants' roles, attitudes or behavior encouraged by the genre, and beliefs, values or knowledge shared or needed to participate within the genre. In contrast to letters to the editor, they seem to be more concerned about knowing how to present, structure and organize cover letters and *résumés* in effective ways. They also highlight features like the purpose of the genre and the use of content as well as rhetorical appeals in order to write effectively within the genre and how to look credible and convincing in front of the employer.

José reports 10 features about genre and rhetorical situation, 13 about rhetorical patterns, from which format is the most frequent, and 10 features about interpretation of patterns. He reveals a great deal of declarative awareness in his genre-analysis task in agreement with his declarative awareness of concepts and strategies reported in Chapter 5 (see example 5, section 5.2.1.1)

- (1) The cover letter is a genre that is restricted to an employer and the employee, this genre can take place at any institution, organization or school in particular. The employer here seeks for people qualified for certain duty. The purpose of this genre is to portrait eligibility for a position in a workplace.

In addition to this, he shows strategic awareness at using genre analysis strategies to write effective cover letters also in agreement with his reports on metacognitive awareness (see example 2, section 5.2.2.1, Chapter 5). Throughout his reflections, he seems to have been concerned about using genre analysis as strategies to interpret, but most of all, to write effectively within genres. This characteristic is consistent throughout José's genre-based performance.

- (2) In order to make a good impression when writing a cover letter, we have to look at different samples, describing the scene, identifying and describing patterns, and analyzing what those strategies reveal about the situation and scene. If we take into consideration these stages, we will write a very convincing and impressive cover letter that will persuade our employer to hire us and leave out the rest of the applications they have received

He continues with the analysis of rhetorical patterns—content, format and structure—as strategies to structure, organize, and present cover letters in effective ways. Through these, we can also perceive the learner's recognition of genre not only as strategies to accomplish

rhetorical purposes, but also as responses made up of pre-established conventions as shown by italics below (see Chapter 3, genre as constraint)

- (3) Cover letters *follows the conventions already established by experts*, they are the inside address on the right, followed by the addressee on the left side of the page, salutation on the left, and position we apply for in the first paragraph. In the second paragraph, we include qualifications and experience; in the third paragraph expectations and personal abilities; the closing on the left (Sincerely yours), the name of the applicant, and the enclosures. If we follow this order, we can secure the interest and impression of the employer when reading our letter

A common pattern in José's metacognitive reflections is his particular awareness of rhetorical appeals, something that he seems to have adapted to the different genres and situations in a conditional manner (see example 17, section 5.2.3.1, Chapter 5). This shows up in his analysis of letters to the editor as well.

- (4) One of the most important parts are the rhetorical appeals which makes the eligibility of the applicant credible on the basis of evidence supported by facts, in this case, certificates and diplomas

Furthermore, he applies knowledge of the rhetorical situation, rhetorical patterns such as language, diction, and rhetorical appeals in his analysis of how cover letters can be written to meet the needs of the audience, in this case the employer, in order to accomplish the objective of getting a job. Apart from showing strategic thinking, this analysis suggests conditional applications of genre:

- (5) Simple sentences are used in writing this type of genre and usage of specialized lexicon is emphasized according to the type of expertise. The voice of the candidate is very direct on why he/she is the right person for the vacancy.
- (6) The cover letter has to show the reader the qualifications, experience and personal abilities of the applicant. This is when the Logos of the letter starts working in the employer's selection and this will be confirmed by the evidence demonstrated by the Ethos, which gives credibility to our letter.
- (7) This stage is fundamental because our audience is very demanding and selective; the most qualified an applicant is, the more chances he or she has to obtain the job. It also makes the candidate more competitive and therefor eligible for any job position.

Throughout his critical reading of cover letters, José reveals a great deal of declarative awareness of genre-based concepts, aspects of the rhetorical situation, rhetorical patterns and interpretations of those patterns. He seems to apply declarative knowledge in strategic ways especially in his analysis of how cover letters should be organized and drafted in the L2. Besides, he displays knowledge of rhetorical appeals and seems to be knowledgeable at using this knowledge in a

conditional manner. Overall, he has transferred metacognitive awareness into the analysis of cover letters in all of the three forms.

We turn to Ricardo, the second most productive learner in analyzing genre features on cover letters, similar to his performance on letters to the editor. In this task, he reports seven features on genre and the rhetorical situation, 16 on rhetorical patterns and nine on interpretation of patterns. He shows good declarative awareness of rhetorical patterns, particularly on features like format and content. In interpreting patterns, he shows greater awareness of actions made possible or restrained by the genre. In the following excerpt, Ricardo seems to apply knowledge of genre-based concepts and the rhetorical situation in order to use cover letters as a means to capture the attention of the employer, suggesting procedural awareness. This analysis is in agreement with his reported declarative awareness (see example 15, section 5.2.1.1; example 18, section 5.2.1.2 in previous chapter):

- (8) A well composed cover letter can be very influential. This is a very good way to call the attention of the interviewers. The key objective of the cover letter is to introduce yourself to potential employers.

In the next excerpt, Ricardo reveals critical awareness at analyzing the use of cover letters in Honduran society. He then interprets values and possibilities of this genre in order to be more effective at interacting within workplace scenes. Apart from showing a socio-cognitive view of genre, the analysis suggests procedural awareness in our interpretation:

- (9) In our country, it is not required to include a cover letter attached to the résumé when we are looking for a job; however, there are some important facts and information we have to share when we are applying for a position in a school that can be presented through this genre. It offers the candidates the opportunity to obtain an interview and, obviously, it helps the resume by making it more attractive and effective.

Besides, Ricardo's critical reading shows awareness of the complementarity of cover letters and résumés. He recognizes the value of using cover letters to enhance résumés; this type of awareness has been termed cross-genre awareness in our analysis of data. Cross-genre awareness is assumed to facilitate new genre knowledge of a similar or complementary genre given that prior knowledge on one of the genres has already been acquired. Ricardo in his declarative awareness shows that he finds the process of writing resumes easier compared to other genres (see example 13, section 5.2.1.1). We have assumed that his thinking about writing résumés is connected to his prior knowledge within the genre. In addition to this, Ricardo applies procedural

awareness in his analysis of how cover letters should be written in order to accomplish the rhetorical purpose for which they are intended. See for example:

- (10) The cover letter has to be in the front, leading the resume. Taking into account this is a formal document, the writer has to use formal words and language used in the educational field like jargon focused on the what the reader wants to know without exaggerating since the reader will evaluate this at the moment of checking the resume. If mistakes are left into the cover letter, it could be understood by the reader as you being careless.
- (11) Sentence structure and verbs will make a powerful impression as to use active statements
- (12) Format style is very useful since it shows your knowledge in written document presentation

In general, Ricardo shows awareness of rhetorical patterns such as language, diction, format and strategies for presenting cover letters. He also applies understanding of the rhetorical situation, in this case the role of the reader and the writer, and an acute interpretation of patterns by referring to the actions that are restrained within the genre. Besides declarative awareness, this analysis suggests procedural awareness and cross-genre awareness. It confirms that Ricardo has been able to use procedural genre awareness in his analysis of how texts within this genre should be effectively written. He showed a great deal of awareness in this sub-category in our findings on metacognitive genre awareness (see example 35, section 5.2.2.2). Other concepts and strategies that reveal Ricardo's procedural awareness at analyzing cover letters and résumés are rhetorical appeals—Ethos and Logos—see for example

- (13) References are very important since they can let the readers know about the credibility of the applicant with respect to other institutions
- (14) A cover letters is the document that highlights the strengths indicating that the applicant is the right person for the job. The resume comes to support what is told in the cover letter with attached diplomas, certificates, references, etc.

In addition, Ricardo shows application of genre-based strategies in his refined understanding of the values and beliefs that are shared or needed to participate in the genre and the actions that are made possible (or restrained) by using it:

- (15) The cover letter highlights important characteristics of the applicant such as attitudes, values, academic preparation, knowledge of the learning process, and even, prestige of the institution to which he/she is applying for. This will make a good impression on the employers since they might make their first cuts on the information contained in the cover letter in order to decide if they will go on with the resume



- (16) The writer must stand out his/her strengths in a discrete manner, the same with his/her values and recent jobs already developed

Despite Ricardo's great deal of declarative and procedural awareness displayed in his analysis of cover letters and résumés, he does not reveal concrete applications of conditional awareness. One of his metacognitive reflections provided in Chapter 6, however, shows intentionality and a strong motivation to use cover letters in real life. This is illustrated as follows:

- (17) I will try to apply this knowledge in an effective way since it will give a good impression to the readers once I become a teacher—(example 4, section 5.2.31)

In short, Ricardo has applied declarative and procedural awareness of genre into his critical reading of cover letters and résumés to a great extent. He has also applied cross-genre awareness and critical thinking in the interpretation of values and beliefs that are shared by participants within the genre. This feature reveals that he has developed important skills for critical awareness of genre. With respect to conditional awareness, we can only account for this in terms of Ricardo's intention and motivation at using cover letters and résumés to meet future rhetorical needs when applying for a job.

Our next case, Doris, reports seven features on genre and the rhetorical situation, 10 on rhetorical patterns and 13 on interpretation of patterns. She reports more features concerning genre, scene and situation when analyzing genre and the rhetorical situation, format and structure when analyzing rhetorical patterns, and beliefs, values and knowledge to participate within the genre when interpreting patterns. Her declarative awareness of genre and the rhetorical situation is shown in her analysis of the scene, participants and purpose of cover letters:

- (18) Nowadays, it is very difficult to find a good job because competition is growing; more people are becoming professionals in different fields. For this reason, it is very important to give a good impression and show the skills that you have as professional to the employer through a cover letter

Interestingly, Doris displays cross-genre awareness, similarly to Ricardo. We can observe an understanding of rhetorical patterns as indicated by content and a subtle interpretation of genre function. This analysis suggests strategic behavior at using cover letters in agreement with her declarative awareness as reported in Chapter 5 (see example 4, section 5.2.1.1)

- (19) A cover letter is a letter that is sent along with your resume while applying for a job. The reason for this letter is to introduce your name and the position you wish to apply for; it highlights the achievements or experiences that differentiate you from other candidates.

In the next excerpt, Doris applies procedural awareness in her analysis of how cover letters should be drafted in order to be successful at responding to workplace situations. See for example:

- (20) To write effective cover letters, you need to indicate that you know something about the employer
- (21) In a more precise manner, she details about content, format The format of cover letters is structured in an organized way, the name and address of the employer, name of the institution, the greeting, among others. This is followed by an opening paragraph which states why you are writing, how you learned about the organization or position, and the basic information about yourself.
- (22) In the second paragraph, tell why you are interested in what the employer does, demonstrate that you know enough about him or the institution to relate your background to the employer or the position. Mention specific qualifications which makes you a good fit to the employer's needs. This is an opportunity to explain in more detail relevant items in your resume. Refer to the fact that the resume is enclosed. Mention other enclosures if they are required to apply for the position.

Through these excerpts, Doris has not only shown strategic awareness at using knowledge of the rhetorical situation—setting, purpose, role of participants, subject— and rhetorical patterns, but also conditional knowledge at adapting the genre to the needs of the employer and the qualifications of the applicant. In this sense, Doris seems to have improved her analysis of cover letters/résumés in comparison to letters to the editor. Her application of procedural and conditional awareness is in agreement with her reports on awareness of strategies to fulfill rhetorical purposes (see example 12, section 5.2.2.1) and conditional awareness applied to rhetorical situations beyond the classroom (see example 24, section 5.2.3.2). Finally, Doris seems to apply critical thinking skills at interpreting rhetorical patterns in the following manner:

- (23) Keep in mind that cover letters will be analyzed in terms of your abilities and interest in the job
- (24) It is important in a cover letter to take the initiative for a follow up saying something like “*I will contact you in the next two weeks to see if you require any additional information regarding my qualifications.*”
- (25) You need to take some effort to draft this letter as per the position and organization you are applying for

It is evident that Doris has been able to apply declarative, procedural and conditional awareness in her analysis of cover letters and résumés. She also reveals a general improvement in development of genre-analysis tasks. She reports about the improvement she has made at analyzing cover letters and résumés in comparison to analyzing letters to the editor. See for example, “*I’ve been writing and analyzing the résumé and cover letter. I notice that these weeks*

*I analyze better and I can deal better with the guidelines ....In this case, doing the genre analysis was not that hard because it is a personal paper.”* When she recognizes that she has gained more confidence at analyzing texts from a genre-based perspective (see example 6, section 5.3.1.2), she confirms her ability to monitor not only genre-based learning but also academic performance in general.

We will proceed with Rebeca. She reports eight features about genre and the rhetorical situation, seven about rhetorical patterns, and seven on interpretation of patterns. The most frequent features reported refer to participants, purpose and rhetorical appeals. The following example illustrates her application of declarative awareness of genre, scene and the rhetorical situation, which supports instances of declarative awareness reported in this chapter (see example 7, section 6.2.1.1; example 19, section 6.2.1.2):

- (26) In this genre, participants are generally unemployed people or job applicants. Participants use the cover letter with the purpose of getting an interview with the employer of the company. First, an employer reads the cover letter and if this contains complete and interesting information about the applicant, the employer decides whether or not to contact the person for an interview

In her analysis, Rebeca attempts to interpret patterns related to the attitudes, values and beliefs needed to participate within this genre as well as the actions that are made possible or not at using it. This shows an understanding of genre as situated in a social context. In the following excerpt, she shows cross-genre awareness by pointing at the complementarity of both cover letters and résumés:

- (27) The cover letter is the first page that the employer will see and is used to seek an interview to provide details about the qualifications of the candidates. For these reasons, it is important to include it with the resume to cause an impression and thus to get an interview

Some instances suggest applications of procedural awareness, particularly at using knowledge of rhetorical appeals in order to use cover letters in convincing ways. An interesting point is Rebeca's use of examples taken from samples analyzed in class to support her analysis, although more details about the situational context are needed to understand the relevance of the examples. Initially, most learners showed conceptual problems in understanding and differentiating rhetorical appeals. Gradually, they seemed to have grasped their basic meaning and started incorporating them across their genre-analysis tasks (see examples on other learners).

- (28) In this genre [cover letters], people try to use logos and ethos to convince the reader of their skills and knowledge. An example of Ethos is, “I am responding to your advertisement in the job magazine yesterday, date here (sample cover letter by Smith, 2003). This gives evidence about how the writer knows about the job. An example of Logos is “I am hard working and enthusiastic” (sample cover letter by Steve, 2011). This last example refers to the qualities.

Rebeca has also shown strategic awareness at using her knowledge of format, structure and language to suggest effective ways to write cover letters. This is in line with her reported reflections on awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks (example 1, section 5.2.2.1), strategies to plan and organize the act of writing (example 16, section 5.2.2.1) and strategies to write effectively within the genre (example 20, section 5.2.2.1).

- (29) Cover letters are organized in the following way. For example, inside address, this includes the mailing address, employer address and date. The salutation, an example of this is, “Dear Mr. John.” The introduction, in this part we find the position the person is applying for, how he/she knows about it, and an explanation of why the person is the perfect applicant for the job. The body paragraphs include the background, skills and qualities. In the closing paragraph, candidates ask for an interview, contact information and an thankful remark to the employer.
- (30) The language used by the participants in this genre is formal. For example, “I would like to thank you...” (sample cover letter by Smith, 2008).

In the final excerpt, Rebeca applies critical awareness at interpreting the values, beliefs, or attitudes enhanced by the genre and shaped by the social context in which participants interact while using it:

- (31) In this genre, the relationship between the participant and the employer is hierarchical because the employer is the boss and the employer must treat him/her with respect. The candidate must show his/her credibility and has to prove who he/she is

In general, Rebeca has largely transferred declarative and procedural awareness into her analysis of cover letters and *résumés*. However, applications of conditional awareness are not yet very visible. Most of her metacognitive awareness applied to this genre is, in most instances, in line with her reports on metacognitive genre awareness. In her reports on conditional awareness, she reports on her intentions to use effective cover letters in order to interact in workplace scenes (see example 2, section 5.2.3.1), but she is not specific at verbalizing how she would adapt this knowledge into those particular situations. This is a common pattern in her reflections.

### 6.2.3 Critical reading of argumentative essays

This was the last and most challenging genre-analysis task performed in the intervention. In this task, Ricardo reports the highest number of features with 35, followed by José with 30 features, Doris with 30 and Rebeca with a total of 22 features (see table 6.3 below).

**Table 6.3** Genre features on argumentative essays per representative case

No.	Genre analysis procedure	Genre feature	Number of instances per student				Instances per genre feature
			Rebeca	Ricardo	Doris	José	
1.	Conceptualizing genre/ Identifying the scene and describing the rhetorical situation (Awareness of context)	Scene and genre	1	2	1	2	6
		Setting	3	1	1	1	6
		Subject	1	1	2	1	5
		Participants	1	5	2	1	9
		Purposes	2	2	2	1	7
2.	Identifying and describing rhetorical patterns (Awareness of form)	Content	5	5	7	7	24
		Format	1	1	1	1	4
		Structure	3	-	1	3	7
		Rhetorical appeals	3	4	3	3	13
		Sentence	-	1	1	2	4
		Diction	-	1	-	2	3
		Others	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Interpreting features and patterns (Thinking critically about the genre)	Beliefs and values of writers and readers	1	5	-	2	8
		People invited and excluded within the genre	-	-	-	-	-
		Values, beliefs, goals and assumptions encouraged within the genre	1	2	2	1	6
		Treatment of subject and importance of content	-	3	5	2	10
		Attitudes towards the readers and the world	-	1	2	1	4
		Actions made possible or restrained by the genre	-	1	-	-	1
		Others	-	-	-	-	-
		<b>Total of features per participant</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>117</b>

As observed, Ricardo and José have been the learners with the highest number of reported features across genres whereas Doris and Rebeca are consistently in third and last place. The most frequent features noticed in this genre relate to the role of the participants and the purpose when describing the rhetorical situation. Regarding rhetorical patterns, learners more often show awareness of content, rhetorical appeals and structure, and when interpreting patterns, they frequently show awareness of treatment of subject and importance of content as well as values and beliefs shared by the participants within the genre. Novice learners within this genre seem to be more concerned about managing the content, which basically consists of identifying or writing the claim as supported by evidence, reasons, warrants and/or qualifiers. Another feature of concern are the rhetorical appeals. The use of Logos, Ethos and Pathos takes a central role in developing convincing and appealing arguments when writing argumentative papers and/or responding to them. Finally, students do seem to be concerned about analyzing the structure of argumentative papers.

Ricardo, our most productive learner in this task, reports 11 features about genre and the rhetorical situation, 12 about rhetorical patterns, and 12 about interpretation of patterns. He reveals a great deal of declarative awareness in his analysis of genre and the rhetorical situation, content and rhetorical appeals in his analysis of rhetorical patterns, and values and beliefs of the participants within the genre in his interpretation of patterns. In the following excerpts, Ricardo displays an insightful analysis of the logic behind argumentation in academic settings by stating that:

- <sup>(1)</sup> Writers of argumentative papers have to look for different means to prove or show that their theory [argument] is correct or it is more trustful than others
- <sup>(2)</sup> The problem arrives when participants find that others have their own thesis and that they do not agree with them because their logic seems very obvious or they lack convincing evidence
- <sup>(3)</sup> In order not to present a vague opinion, the writer must follow some steps to go deeper into the theory with known principles or proven scientific studies. In this way, readers might not think it is a simple opinion since they can argue successfully

Besides revealing a good understanding of rhetorical aspects and the logic of classical argumentation, Ricardo reveals critical awareness by interpreting the underlying values, beliefs and knowledge that readers and writers must share in order to participate successfully in this type of genre. Ricardo's analytical work displays declarative awareness and procedural awareness,

although very slightly. Some of his analysis is in agreement with reported declarative awareness in Chapter 5 (see example 2, section 5.2.1.1). In the next excerpts, he applies declarative knowledge of rhetorical appeals and components of the rhetorical situation, such as roles of writers and readers to suggest ways to present arguments:

- <sup>(4)</sup> Readers must find in this kind of papers strong rhetorical appeals in order to think in a deeply logical process. Making logical points in argumentative papers appeal to the readers' analysis
- <sup>(5)</sup> In this type of genre, the writer must use Logos and Ethos more than Pathos, since persuasiveness of the writer's position depend on them

In the next excerpts, he goes deeper into the analysis of content, rhetorical situation and interpretation of values and beliefs within the genre to suggest ways to structure arguments in academic settings. This shows procedural awareness, but Ricardo does not succeed at providing specific examples to support his claims.

- <sup>(6)</sup> Justifications or warrants have to be influenced by other writers, experts or researchers in the field, this makes the argumentative paper be more trustful.
- <sup>(7)</sup> The writer does not need to include too much personal experience in it because this kind of evidence lessens the value of the paper and readers think of this as fallacies used by the author. Indeed, the writer must include other writers in a position that differs with his or hers. These counterarguments will be proven with the main claim in the argumentative paper

Finally, he applies knowledge of rhetorical patterns such as language, diction and format to describe how to write arguments, which shows some procedural awareness as well. Again, his analysis is not supported with specific examples or details.

- <sup>(8)</sup> The correct use of language creates a serious and credible image of the writer who must use formal language with complex sentences in some cases. Words used ought to be especially powerful and persuasive in order not to detract the argument from the reader's credibility

Overall, Ricardo demonstrates a very good conceptual understanding of argumentation in academic settings. He also displays a great deal of declarative awareness about genre, components of the rhetorical situation, rhetorical patterns—rhetorical appeals, content, language and diction—including interpretation of patterns. He seems to apply most of his declarative knowledge of concepts and strategies in a procedural manner, but he rather fails at providing examples and details about how to use that knowledge in those contexts or situations. This is not a weakness particular to Ricardo, but to most of the learners in the study. He does not reveal

specific instances of conditional awareness in his analysis of argumentative essays either, a pattern that was observed in his analysis of letters to the editor and cover letters as well. His budding conditional awareness is in agreement with reports on metacognitive genre awareness (see example 5, section 5.2.3.1). Something that stands out in Ricardo's performance, however, is his motivation and high level of intentionality to apply genre-based knowledge both inside and outside the classroom. This behavior was observed early in his reflections about awareness of strategies to improve academic performance (see example 27, section 5.2.2.1). In addition to this, Ricardo demonstrated an ability to monitor cognitive performance at noticing task difficulties and reacting strategically to repair cognitive difficulties by himself. This particular behavior led us to classify him as a *high-monitoring learner*.

Another productive learner in genre-analysis tasks is José. In this task, he reports approximately six features about genre and the rhetorical situation, 17 about rhetorical patterns and six about interpreting patterns. He is particularly aware of content, structure and rhetorical appeals when analyzing the rhetorical patterns. With reference to interpreting patterns, he shows critical thinking about values and beliefs and treatment or importance of content. His interpretation of patterns and declarative awareness of components of the rhetorical situation is displayed in the analysis of arguments:

- <sup>(9)</sup> Stating an argument is sometimes an easy issue because we can make an argument almost about everything, the hardest thing is making an argument that catches the attention of the audience or that appeals to thinking and reasoning of particular scholars and students.

José has become aware of using citations in academic writing and has been able to incorporate those in his analysis papers. As has been mentioned, this feature seems to have been progressively incorporated by learners into their own writing. In terms of application of metacognitive genre awareness, it is easy to notice José's declarative awareness of scene, the participants, purpose and subject:

- <sup>(10)</sup> The participants are most of the time the writer and the reader which are in reciprocal interaction in this scene, for instance, students, scholars and scientists (Devitt, Reiff, & Bawarshi, 2004)
- <sup>(11)</sup> The subject deals, for example, with events, people, texts, issues of interest to particular audiences
- <sup>(12)</sup> Lastly, the purpose unavoidable when it comes to writing powerful arguments is that the writer must take a position in relation to the topic



In the next excerpt, he reveals strategic awareness of analyzing the qualities of a good claim in order to write powerful argumentative papers, a behavior that is recurrent in José's reflection and his analysis of genres:

- (13) In order to make our paper powerful, we have to set controversial, debatable and arguable claims which probably cause a change or reaction in the reader whether in favor or against our way of thinking

He goes deeper into the analysis of content in classical argumentation theory, displaying declarative awareness of rhetorical patterns:

- (14) Content is one of the most important features because the more powerful are the claims, the more powerful the claim is, the more successful the written piece. The content is made out of claims, evidence, reasons, and warrants.
- (15) Purdue Writing Lab (2001) states that a claim is the central idea of the paper and it also distinguishes three types of claims, claims of facts, claims of values, and claims of policies.
- (16) The evidence is presented as the facts that support the claims; the reasons are some sort of expectations that have to fulfill the readers' ideas about the claim, and warrants are universal principles or assumptions that support the claim

Then, he turns to the analysis of language and diction, but the lack of specific details reveals weaknesses in verbalizing his knowledge.

- (17) Sentences show the writer's style, they can be simple, complex, or declarative. Diction is seminal for the aesthetics of our paper; some of the issues that should not be overlooked are grammar, mechanics and word choice.

Finally, he shows critical awareness through his interpretation of values and beliefs within the genre and understanding of rhetorical appeals—see for example:

- (18) The credibility that the writer must show is important by supporting his or her arguments with evidence. These patterns also reveal how knowledgeable the writer should be about the topic and his/her professionalism at organizing the ideas in a logical manner

It is evident that José has acquired a good understanding of the concepts behind classical argumentation in academic settings useful in his analysis of argumentative essays. This is in alignment with his declarative awareness reported in the previous chapter. With regard to procedural awareness, José has shown a moderate degree of strategic behavior, mostly displayed in his understanding of stating claims and its parts to set up good arguments and using language and diction to write within the genre. He often applies genre analysis strategies to write powerful

arguments in order to fulfill the rhetorical objectives with the audience. This is in agreement with his reported procedural awareness to perform genre analysis tasks (see example 2, section 5.2.2.1; example 33, section 5.2.2.2) and procedural awareness to write persuasively (see example 19, section 5.2.2.1). Conditional applications of genre did not emerge very clearly in his analysis. His reports on conditional awareness describe knowledge of rhetorical appeals used as strategies to adapt to the audience's expectations (see examples 17 & 20, section 5.2.3.1) and the use of argumentative writing in academic settings.

We now turn to Doris' critical reading of argumentative essays. In her analysis, Doris reports eight features about genre and the rhetorical situation, 13 about rhetorical patterns, and nine about interpretation of patterns. She seems to pay particular attention to content, the use of rhetorical appeals, the treatment of subject and importance of content in analyzing argumentative essays. Firstly, she seems to transfer declarative knowledge about rhetorical concepts, such as the role of writers and awareness of audience, in analyzing argumentative essays. Second, she shows awareness of task difficulty due to the complexity of writing this type of genre has and the demands imposed by the audience, to respond in a persuasive tone. Her awareness of task difficulty is in line with her reflections on declarative awareness of task and the self as reported in Chapter 5. See the example below:

- <sup>(19)</sup> Writing an argumentative essay is not an easy task because it is a sort of paper that you have to know the topic or theme very well and you have to persuade an opposing audience to adopt new beliefs or behavior

Doris goes further in her analysis of scene, setting, role of the participants, and purpose. In the next excerpt, she displays a refined understanding of rhetorical aspects by highlighting the persuasive nature of classical argumentation and interpreting values, beliefs and knowledge shared by the participants within this genre. Moreover, she seems to be perceptive of readers' nature usually characterized by a tendency to resist opposite views in scientific communities. Besides displaying declarative awareness, she seems to have applied critical awareness of genre in her rhetorical analysis.

- <sup>(20)</sup> An argument can be academic or professional; for this reason, it cannot be written for common people as we do in letters to the editor. An argumentative paper has to be written for professionals who know how to argue with facts, evidence and reasoning.

- <sup>(21)</sup> The purpose of an argumentative paper is to persuade, convince people to change beliefs that many of them do not want to change.

In the next excerpts, she reveals explicit declarative knowledge of rhetorical patterns in her analysis of content of classical argumentative writing—the claim and its parts. She displays strategic knowledge with implications in drafting argumentative essays, but in an indirect manner:

- (22) All argumentative topics have pros and cons. The content has to have reasons, evidence and warrants that support your idea. This is the most important part when persuading others because we are asking people to change their beliefs or actions. We support our ideas with facts, statistics and authorities in order not to leave room for doubts.
- (23) Remember, without a good thesis you cannot have a good argumentative paper, the typical good thesis specifies an accurate and arguable statement that a reasonable person might disagree with. For this reason, you have to provide your readers with some background about the issue.

She also displays declarative knowledge and more explicit strategic knowledge by analyzing rhetorical patterns specific to topic, content, structure and format—all of them with implications in the rhetorical structure, organization and drafting of the genre.

- (24) It is important to find a good topic for an argumentative essay; you should consider several issues that have conflicting points of view or very different conclusions. As an example, I think (a local example on a controversial issue is given).
- (25) In an argumentative paper, you have to explain why your belief is reasonable and logical.... In fact, the act of arguing involves providing evidence that support your claim, with or without emotions. After describing the “other side”, you will present your own viewpoint and then provide evidence that your position is the correct one. This paper contains a structure based on introduction, background, statement of claim, summary of refutation, and conclusion.

Lastly, she applies declarative knowledge of rhetorical patterns. In this case, she refers to language and rhetorical appeals with certain strategic awareness that can be useful at structuring and organizing argumentative writing. This analysis is compatible with her reports on procedural awareness to write effectively within the genre where she refers to the use of language in argumentative papers (see example 22, section 5.2.2.1).

- (26) It is important to use passionate language, cite experts who agree with you, provide facts, evidence, statistics that support your position.

In short, Doris has displayed a great amount of declarative awareness in her analysis. She also shows awareness of strategies with implications in the rhetorical structure, organization and writing of argumentative papers. In addition, she reveals critical awareness of genre at interpreting patterns related to the nature of argumentation, concept of audience and values,

knowledge and beliefs generally shared by participants within the genre. There are no clear instances of flexible and selective use of strategies at analyzing argumentative essays, which in our view, indicates a budding conditional awareness. Her strong motivation and willingness to transfer genre-based knowledge seems to be relevant in her conditional awareness. In fact, she has succeeded at transferring this knowledge to comply with academic tasks in one of her courses (see example 27, section 5.2.3.2). We assume that having a strong motivation and willingness to apply genre-based knowledge can be important factors in transferring knowledge to other academic contexts or situations as in Doris' case. This insight has been observed in Ricardo's behavior as well.

We will move onto our last case, which is Rebeca. She obtained eight features at analyzing genre and the rhetorical situation, 12 at analyzing rhetorical patterns and two at interpreting patterns. She seems to be particularly aware of the setting as part of the rhetorical situation, content, structure and rhetorical appeals as parts of the rhetorical patterns and beliefs, values and knowledge shared by participants when interpreting the genre. She applies declarative knowledge to analyze genre, scene, and the rhetorical situation.

- <sup>(27)</sup> The argument paper not only gives information about a topic, it also presents arguments with supporting ideas and evidence as well as the opposing ideas of an argumentative issue. This genre is used in academic settings. For example, universities, schools, and colleges. It is also used in professional settings in technical reports, scientific reports, etc. Participants in this genre are generally teachers and students. The writer's purpose is to take a stand and write as if he or she is trying to persuade an opposing audience to convince them and change their behavior and beliefs.

Then, she moves onto analyzing the rhetorical patterns, showing understanding of concepts and genre-analysis strategies whilst doing it. This analysis implies strategic behavior at describing content and rhetorical appeals, but for the most part, the analysis remains declarative. An interesting feature is that she has incorporated citations to support her claims:

- <sup>(28)</sup> The content of an argument paper includes the thesis statement of the author. It includes what kind of claim they want to make, which can be causal claim. It argues that something is caused by another thing; for example, "violent behavior in children is caused by violence they encounter through playing video games" (Scenes of Writing, p. 295).
- <sup>(29)</sup> In this genre, one of the author makes use of rhetorical appeals like Pathos. For example, "children are clamoring for texts that are graphically appealing and have an element of technology (taken Michigan Corpus of upper-level student papers, 2009)

In the next excerpt, she specifies rhetorical patterns regarding format and structure. However, we still observe that her analysis is predominantly declarative with implications on procedural

awareness in an indirect manner. Procedural awareness here relates to knowledge of strategies to write within the genre, which also aligns with her procedural awareness reported in the previous chapter (see example above).

- <sup>(30)</sup> The structure of argumentative papers includes the introduction, presentation of the reason to support the claim, the summary of and refutation of opposing views, and conclusion. In the introduction, the author clarifies the background, explanation of the issue and the statement of the claim. In the summary or and refutation of opposing views we find the opposing argument and the refutation to make it seem untrue. In the conclusion, the author gives a summary of the argument.

In the final excerpt, Rebeca rounds up her analysis with a summary which displays declarative knowledge of genre and rhetorical aspects in detail, but most of all, it displays critical awareness concerning interpretation of values, beliefs and knowledge shared by participants. Her progress at analyzing the nature of genre and the rhetorical components as well as interpreting sociological aspects of the genre is quite impressive at this point considering her low level of metacognitive awareness shown at the beginning of the study:

- <sup>(31)</sup> Taking everything into account, we can conclude that the argument paper gives information about one topic and describes the author's position, hoping to persuade readers based on interpretation of the evidence. For that reason, the author has considered the issue honestly and reasonable and has a logical and complex understanding of the topic in order to present an effective and reliable argument.

To summarize, Rebeca shows a great deal of declarative awareness in her analysis and interpretation of argumentative essays. She applies knowledge of genre-based concepts, rhetorical situation, patterns and interpretation of those patterns in a confident manner showing both progress in her analysis of generic features and strategic behavior. The latter has been found to be in agreement with results on procedural genre awareness related to strategies to perform genre analysis tasks (see example 29, section 5.2.2.2). With respect to procedural awareness, she demonstrates knowledge of strategies specifically related to organizing, structuring and writing within the genre. This also agrees with results on her awareness of strategies to plan and organize the act of writing or to write effectively within the genre (see examples 18, section 5.2.2.1; example 38, section 5.2.2.2). However, we find that procedural awareness in this task remains for the most part implicit. We do not observe explicit knowledge of conditional applications in her critical reading either. This finding shows a similar pattern in Rebeca's critical reading across tasks.

### 6.3 Results on quantitative data

To perform quantitative analyses we used a genre-based reading and composition test which was applied during pre- and post- sessions of the study. Issues about reliability and validity have already been presented and discussed in Chapter 4. The test's reading task consisted of critical analysis of generic features of argumentative writing. The task was comprised of 15 short answer questions divided into three sections: (1) Exploring the scene with five questions worth 20 points, (2) analyzing rhetorical patterns with six questions worth 30 points, and (3) connecting the text to the social context with four questions worth 20 points. In total, the reading section was worth 70 points.

To answer the test, students were asked to read an argumentative essay twice, first for general understanding and second for detailed comprehension. The essay for the pre-test was downloaded from the educational website <http://www.writefix.com/argument/universityeducation.htm> and the essay for the post-test was downloaded from <http://www.testmagic.com/test/ViewDtlEssay.asp? EssayID=24&Topic ID=124>. Both websites are intended to provide learners at pre-college level with practice on argumentative writing in order to take standardized examinations to enter universities in English-speaking countries.

To ensure inter-rater reliability, we included three different raters who scored the tests independently. To perform the task, we separated each of the answers from both pre- and post-tests and then arranged them in sets per questions e.g., all responses for question # 1, # 2, # 3, etc. Each set was shuffled in a way that each rater would have a randomized set of 24 answers per question (12 answers per question for both pre- and post-tests). Instead of using students' names, we used coded numbers. All of this would guarantee the least possible bias in the raters' assessment of reading items. The raters' task consisted of reading the student's answer, comparing it with an answer key provided by the researcher, and assigning a score based on their judgment of quality and closeness to the original. The scoring rate was based on 1-4 (1= answer of student mostly different from answer key; 4= answer of student almost the same to the answer). Test scores were analyzed on the basis of the sum of raters' scores.

Analysis of pre-test reading scores, resulted in  $M = 93.20$  and  $SD = 10.4$  out of a total of 210 points (the sum of the test per each of the raters). Post-test scores resulted in  $M = 111.0$  and  $SD = 11.3$  (See table 6.4 for the results).

**Table 6.4** Comparison of results on individual pre- and post-reading test scores.

<b>Student</b>	<b>Reading Pre-Test</b>	<b>Reading Post-Test</b>
<b>Rebeca</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Doris</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>112</b>
Roberto	88	104
Juan	111	123
<b>José</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Ricardo</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>124</b>
Zulema	98	95
Rosa	103	118
Armando	95	119
Rocio	79	124
Whitney	72	93
Shirley	95	100

Reading scores are consistent with findings on qualitative data where Jose and Ricardo proved to be the most productive learners when analyzing texts whereas Doris and Rebeca remained in third and fourth place across tasks. Since the study counted on a small number of participants, we did not apply inferential statistical tests. As a result, we did not interpret differences between pre- and post-test scores in terms of changes of knowledge and skills.

#### **6.4 Summary of findings**

Learners demonstrate that they have applied metacognitive genre awareness in their analysis and interpretation of argumentative genres in different ways and to a different extent. According to our results, learners report the highest number of features at analyzing cover letters/résumés and argumentative essays and fewer features at analyzing letters to the editor. Overall, learners show variation in their genre-based performance across tasks. Most of the findings seem to be in agreement with reports on metacognitive genre awareness. Learners display a great deal of declarative genre awareness of key concepts—genre, scene, situation—components of the rhetorical situation, rhetorical patterns and interpretation of patterns. All of this knowledge is fundamental in the analysis and interpretation of texts from a genre-awareness perspective. In addition, it appears that their noticing particular features depend, to some extent, on the genre under study.

Learners demonstrate procedural awareness at applying concepts and strategies to a great extent, although they perform in relatively different ways. A learner, for example, can display knowledge of certain strategies to analyze one particular genre, but then shows different knowledge of strategies when analyzing another genre. Learners also show that they can be more strategic at analyzing one genre, but not very strategic at analyzing other more complex genres such as argumentative essays. Learners show different levels of metacognitive awareness in different tasks. Interestingly, all learners connect genre analysis with choices to interpret and write effectively within a particular genre. In addition, all learners display critical awareness of genre at interpreting rhetorical patterns especially when referring to values, beliefs, knowledge shared by the participants and actions made possible or restrained by the genre. In some cases, cross-genre awareness is also visible, particularly at interpreting complementary genres such as cover letters and résumés. One difficulty observed is that almost all learners provide insufficient details when describing applications of procedural awareness.

Learners display conditional awareness to a lesser extent compared to declarative and procedural awareness. Most of the time, conditional applications are not explicitly stated nor supported with specific examples and details. Very often, learners seem to be knowledgeable of when or why to apply genre-based knowledge but in a superficial manner. In a few cases, conditional applications are mostly observed in the learner's predisposition or motivation to apply genre knowledge to meet particular rhetorical needs in the near future or to improve academic performance in or outside the class.





## **Chapter 7**

### **Findings on metacognitive genre awareness in the development of writing skills**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The present chapter reports the findings related to the research question on how metacognitive genre awareness contributes to the development of academic writing in English. We explore the development of learners' composition of letters to the editor, cover letters/résumés, and critical response papers. Building on Negretti and Kuteeva (2011), the assumption behind our question is that metacognitive genre awareness can be beneficial to academic writing. Again, to account for transfer of metacognitive genre awareness into learners' writing skills, we relied on qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data, in this chapter, consist of writing samples, three genre-based samples per representative case. On the other hand, quantitative data consist of pre- and post-test scores on learners' writing skills. We also used findings on metacognitive genre awareness and critical reading skills to complement results on writing skills. A summary of findings is provided at the end of the chapter.

#### **7.2 Results on qualitative data**

This section concerns the analysis of learners' production of argumentative genres in terms of letters to the editors, cover letters/résumés, and critical response papers. Data consist of 12 written samples, three samples written by each case on each of the genres. As explained before, students wrote their own samples of argumentative texts after analyzing and reporting their findings within the genres.

The first genre-based task consisted of writing a letter to the editor on the topic "Saving Patuca River". This topic was chosen because it is a controversial issue in Honduras that relates to the construction of a hydroelectric dam in an area declared world heritage. To simulate real-life communication, learners engaged in a virtual forum through [www.nicenet.org](http://www.nicenet.org) to exchange their letters and respond to each other. The second genre-based task consisted of writing a personal résumé with its corresponding cover letter. Despite the lack of teaching experience in

the field, learners were challenged to be as persuasive as possible at demonstrating strengths and competencies for teaching English as a foreign or second language. In this task, the teacher-researcher played the role of the employer who had to select the most suitable teacher for a position at a local bilingual school. For the third task, learners were required to read three argumentative papers on educational topics and respond to one of them with a critical response paper. First, learners were prepared with a transitional task which was the genre-analysis of the authentic argumentative essays. The essays were written by native speakers of English pursuing undergraduate studies in universities of the United States and downloaded from the Michigan Corpus Database at <http://micusp.elicorpora.infor/> (see details in Ch. 4). After doing the analysis of the essays, they chose their favorite one and wrote their critical analysis paper in response to it. They were given additional instructions for writing within the critical response paper because of the differences between the genres of argumentative and critical response papers.

Before proceeding with analyses of text-based data, each of the writing samples were scored by independent raters in Honduras. Then, each written sample was carefully read and comments or phrases that were considered to be relevant to the research question were written down by each of the raters. Next, we analyzed each of the samples for applications of metacognitive genre awareness in the form of cross-analysis with previous findings on each of the metacognitive components (see chapter 5). Due to the intricate relationship between genre-analysis tasks and genre-based writing tasks, we also applied cross-analysis between findings in metacognitive genre awareness and critical reading skills to ensure triangulation.

All of the Honduran raters involved in the assessment of writing samples are professionals with many years of teaching experience in the EFL/ESL field. Five of them hold Master's Degrees in TEFL studies or didactics in teaching languages from national or foreign universities. One of the raters is pursuing a PhD degree in bilingual studies. Each rater was provided with 12 copies of texts depending on his/her assigned genre. The idea of having two different raters per genre was to enhance objectivity in the assessment of the whole set of sample texts. The task, however, was not intended to be as exhaustive as the reading and writing rating task since our main interest was to obtain an independent assessment of writing samples different from the one provided by the teacher-researcher. To accomplish the task, raters were given a rubric and instructed independently from each other (it was difficult to meet with them in one session because of their different jobs and schedules).

Rubrics were selected and adapted to the particular features of the genre and the task (see corresponding appendices). Letters to the editor were assessed on the basis of claim, organization, relevance and strength of ideas, evidence and/or reasoning, voice, and command of grammar and mechanics were considered (rubric adapted from YES Magazine for teachers [www.yesmagazine.org/pdf/education/essay\\_evaluation\\_rubric.doc](http://www.yesmagazine.org/pdf/education/essay_evaluation_rubric.doc)). Assessment of cover letters and résumés was based on presentation/format and structure, opening/introduction and objective, content, elements of technical and rhetorical knowledge, grammar/mechanics and spelling (rubric adapted from Prentice-Hall, Inc. <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/rubrics/printable/26757.html>). To assess critical response papers, we used the same criteria as on the academic reading and writing test. These criteria consisted of claim, evidence/reasons, warrants, counterargument/rebuttal, and voice (adapted from Cheng, 2010). All of the rubrics were based on a total score of 90 points distributed differently based on the criteria to be evaluated (see tables with scores under their corresponding section below). At the end of the task, raters submitted their scores in a sealed envelope to the teacher-researcher. These rubrics were familiar for the students only to a general level.

We tested raters' scores for correlation and inter-rater reliability. After running a Pearson correlation test, results show a coefficient of  $r = .32$  between raters of letters to the editor, a positive but non-significant correlation. Correlation between raters of cover letters and résumés reached  $r = .85$ ,  $p = 0.01$  (2-tailed) and correlation between raters of critical response paper reached  $r = .65$ ,  $p = 0.05$  (2-tailed). Then we tested for inter-rater reliability on all of the raters and average scores, obtaining a coefficient of  $\alpha = .87$ . Next, we tested for alpha per rater on sub-rating scores. The results are presented on table 7.1.

**Table 7.1** Raters' reliability on sub-rating scores across genres

Writing task	Rater	Alpha
Letter to the editor	A1	.87
	B1	.74
Cover letter and résumé	A2	.83
	B2	.77
Critical response paper	A3	.89
	B3	.93

### 7.2.1 Composition of letters to the editor

The following table shows the average scores of representative cases on the task in each of the criteria included in the rubric.

**Table 7.2** Average scores on learners' letters to the editor

Student's name	Grading Rubric						Average score (out of 90 pts)
	Focus claim 1-15	Organization 1-15	Relevance and strength of ideas 1-15	Evidence and/or reasoning 1-15	Voice 1-15	Grammar and mechanics 1-15	
Rebeca	12.5	11.5	11.5	12	10.5	10.5	68.5
José	12.5	14.5	13.5	13.5	12.5	12	78.5
Ricardo	14.5	13	13.5	12.5	13.5	10	77
Doris	10.5	12	12	12	14	11.5	72

Our first case is José who is the strongest writer within this genre, with a total score of 78.5. This result is also in agreement with his critical reading of letters to the editor where he proved to be the most productive learner and demonstrated a great deal of critical awareness within this genre. In his writing, he shows understanding of the genre by showing attempts to persuade and convince the audience of the consequences of constructing a dam in the Patuca River. He has also been able to transfer understanding of the scene and elements of the rhetorical situation such as role of the participants—readers and writer—and purpose, see for example:

...We as Hondurans that are aware of the damage that this dam can cause to our country and the repercussions that this will bring to Miskitos have to take a steady stand to protest, protect, and look for international help...

This understanding is in agreement with José's declarative awareness of scene (example 5, section 5.2.1.1, Chapter 5) and procedural awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks (see example 2, section 5.2.2.1, Chapter 5). With reference to rhetorical patterns, José seems to have transferred declarative knowledge of content, format and structure of letters to the editor by first writing a short introduction on the topic with a statement of the claim (see sentence in italics):

Honduras is one of the greatest countries around the world due to the abundance of natural resources that somehow are reduced by the people in charge of managing these resources. *Moreover, taking decisions such as building Patuca hydroelectric dam is going to cause a great impact in the environment as well as in the people living close to this area such as Miskitos, Tawahkas, and Pech.*

José is able to write a clear and well-focused claim, but does not include enough and specific details about the problem to help the reader understand the context of the situation. As a result, he does not apply declarative awareness of rhetorical situation and patterns in strategic manner; this affects his application of rhetorical appeals as strategies, in particular, *logos*. Throughout José's reports on metacognitive genre awareness though, he consistently showed procedural and even conditional awareness of the audience, the role of the reader-writer, and in particular, the use of rhetorical appeals according to audience (see example 6, section 5.2.1.1; example 19, section 5.2.2.1; example 17, section 5.2.3.1, Chapter 5). This was also evident in our findings on the development of critical reading skills (see examples 1 & 2, section 6.2.2, Chapter 6). In his writing, this strategic thinking can be seen in the following example:

Patuca is the longest river of Honduras with 320 kms long. [In] The downstream of the river where the dam is going to be constructed, it is found the largest wilderness in Central America, this great variety of flora and fauna is what characterizes this river (Opperman, 2011). Beside the river, there is tropical forest that produces oxygen not only for the communities, but also to [for the] entire population of Honduras.

The excerpt above shows the use of rhetorical appeals as strategies to write a convincing letter to the editor. José appeals to *logos* to persuade the reader about the importance of the Patuca river through the use of factual information and numbers which he supports with a citation. This also reinforces *ethos*, but again, he does not elaborate adequately on the reasons and/or warrants to support the evidence in relation to the claim. Even though he seems to be strategic at using rhetorical appeals when needed, he does not fully succeed at showing the relevance and strengths of data to support the claim. In other words, he lacks conditional thinking at using data flexibly to fully convince the reader about why or how the Patuca reserve should be protected against potential threats. He obtained an average score of 13.5 under *relevance and strengths of ideas* indicating an outstanding performance, though. In the next paragraph, José displays knowledge of *pathos* and *logos* as rhetorical strategies to persuade the audience, however, he shows problems at providing a solid explanation to prove his claim:

The dam is a major concern for the inhabitants close to this area, due to the impact that this will cause in their economy; this will immerse them in a more critical situation from the one they are by now;

this threaten[s] their food security and the cultural survival of the Tawahkan people, disrupt transportation and commerce for all the Miskitos.... (*appeal to Pathos*)

Thus, the responsibility of keeping this place safe is not only for the Miskitos or Tawahkans, this should be a social concern because this affects indirectly the entire Honduran population. (*appeal to Logos*)

In the remainder of the letter, he continues supporting the claim with additional examples on the consequences of the construction of the dam, but he does not support them with sources of information, something that weakens his credibility as a writer from this point on. We therefore assume that José has transferred declarative and procedural awareness of rhetorical appeals to a great extent, yet he seems to fail at using this knowledge in conditional manner. With regard to other rhetorical features such as format, structure, language and diction, embedded in the rubric under the criterion of *organization, grammar and mechanics*, José appears to be in alignment with his reported declarative and procedural awareness. In some of the prompts in his genre analysis paper on letters to the editor, he reveals procedural awareness of strategies to write effectively within the genre in the following manner:

Commonly, this type of genre is structured in a logical sequence: The title, the introduction and within it the main claim, the body and the conclusion (Excerpt 19, genre analysis paper on letter to the editor)

The structures of the sentences also tell us how good or intelligible the writer is; they have to be clear and connected as a chain to make sense to the reader (Excerpt 27, genre analysis paper on letter to the editor)

He has translated this knowledge into the organization of his letter in strategic manner, which can be observed through the average score of 14.5 for an outstanding organization according to the raters. He attempts to apply academic strategies at reporting evidence by means of citations although he is not very accurate (this feature is actually not required in this type of genre). In addition, he indents paragraphs and applies formatting style according to APA guidelines as suggested in class. In terms of grammar and mechanics, he uses clear and intelligible grammatical structures. A salient problem in his grammar is the length of the sentences which are generally long and only separated by commas or semi-colons. He overuses subordinate conjunctions in an attempt to make his writing sounds more academic, but at some point, it tends to be overwhelming to the reader. Finally, his voice sounds engaging according to the raters' scoring and the tone sounds respectful to the audience, but it may need some more forcefulness to appeal to the audience's emotions and beliefs given the nature of the genre.

Our next case is illustrated by Ricardo who displays a great deal of declarative, procedural, and to a lesser extent, conditional awareness in his interpretation of letters to the editor. In his writing, he shows understanding of the purpose of the genre and the role of the readers and writers in it by the manner in which he approaches the topic and tries to use convincing evidence to support his claim. In the introduction, he provides some background on energy power in Honduras and the potential of the Project “Patuca III” in providing such energy. He has used relevant facts and details to develop the topic, but he does not seem to be very strategic at organizing the introduction appropriately. The sentence containing the controlling idea is rather placed in the middle and there is not a logical discussion of ideas that lead the reader to infer that this is the actual claim.

Honduras has had some problems with regard to energy power which affects the situation of vulnerable sectors of the country. In the last 10 years[,] Honduras has had a deeply transformation in power generation which has been poorly managed by the government. *Now a new project called “Patuca III” is taking place in the scenery of the country without contemplate[ing] the environmental impact and how this [will] affect the inhabitants.*

In the remainder of the introductory paragraph, he includes specific details in the use of facts and reports by experts on the topic, but instead of clarifying the issue and leading naturally to the claim, he provides too much information to the reader and tends to lose coherence and cohesion in the process.

...we can see the changes the government has done in the area of the Patuca National Park in order to obtain profit (Article No 157-99-CP, official journal “La Gaceta”, published on December 21, 1999). I understand Honduras government has implemented new ways to get energetic resources using different means such as thermoelectric power suppliers and Aeolian energy towers. According to the ENEE director, the process has been into the legal framework which law demands (?), in agreement with the environmental license No 024-201; as citizens we know Honduras is demanding an enormous rate of hydroelectric energy in order to reduce and lower the prices to the consumer.

This contrasts with Ricardo’s strategic awareness of rhetorical patterns in his analysis of letters to the editor where he points to the importance of structure and format at writing within the genre (see example 8, section 6.2.1, Chapter 6). Interestingly, in our findings on declarative awareness of the self as cognitive agent, Ricardo reported to have difficulties at structuring papers because of his tendency to work on mechanics or spelling (see example 29, section 5.2.1.2, Chapter 5). On another issue, in his introductory paragraph, it is also evident that Ricardo has done research about the topic and has been able to use relevant facts and details. In this sense, he seems to



appeal to ethos or credibility of the writer. This is in agreement with his strategic awareness of rhetorical appeals and concept of audience as found in chapter 6 (see example 9, section 6.2.2). We also find implications on awareness of other rhetorical features like language and diction. He, for example, seems to be aware of using technical vocabulary or jargon according to the topic. We find lexical items such as *thermoelectric power suppliers*, *Aeolian energy towers*, or *hydroelectric energy* to be highly specialized, yet comprehensible to the average-educated reader. This feature seems to be in agreement with Ricardo's conditional awareness about using diction and language style according to the complexity of the topic or the intended rhetorical purpose (see example 10, section 6.2.1).

In the next paragraph, Ricardo starts developing the claim by explaining the environmental consequences of building a dam in the Patuca River. He closes his letters with a strong plea to the citizens to stand up for their rights, this time, following conventions on structure in a better way. His making a strong call for social action relates to *voice* in our rubric for which he received an average score of 13.5, giving him an outstanding performance according to the raters. See the following excerpts:

However, environmental problems in Honduras are bigger than those presented by the government since these studies do not take care about the soil erosion caused by the deforestation once the dam is going to be built. Among other consequences we can mention the loss of flora and fauna, our source of water and oxygen, since Patuca is one of the biggest lungs in [of] America; the loss of animals in danger of extinction, destruction of the natural habitat, and destruction of the route of migration.

...We have to stand for our own right to defend the land of our ancestors by not allowing the government to sell it in pieces to international companies. Only in that way we will secure a better standard of living to our fellow citizens.

This time he provides further evidence relevant to the claim, but fails at supporting that evidence with corresponding sources, compromising the credibility he had already established with the reader from the beginning. His argumentation, however, is clear and in terms of relevance and strength of ideas he seems to have improved (see scores in table above on this criterion). In addition, Ricardo seems to have developed meta-awareness of pragmatic aspects concerning tone and register as revealed by some of his excerpts in the analysis of letters to the editor:

In letters to the editor, the content is treated in a formal and serious manner where writers must show a polite and respectful image...(excerpt 17, genre analysis paper on letter to the editor)

Recognizable writer's tone will imprint honesty; [it] makes contact with the readers and it will make readers believe (excerpt 18, genre analysis paper on letter to the editor)

We believe that Ricardo has transferred this strategic awareness into his writing of letters to the editor and has succeeded at using an appropriate tone, mostly formal and respectful to the audience, as expressed in his metacognitive reflections. According to the rating scores, Ricardo has performed much lower in grammar and mechanics than the rest of the items. A common problem is long sentences and overuse of commas or semi-colons, similar to José. Generally, Ricardo's writing is clear and intelligible for the intended purpose. His total score shows that he is the second best rated writer within this genre.

In the case of Rebeca, she reported to have applied declarative, procedural, and to a lesser extent, conditional awareness in analyzing texts within this genre. In her reports on metacognitive genre awareness, she reveals procedural awareness of strategies to perform genre analysis tasks with respect to letters to the editor (see example 9, section 5.2.2.1, Chapter 5). At analyzing her writing, we can see that she has transferred understanding of concepts like purpose of the genre, topic, and role of reader-writer to some extent. We recognize her effort at persuading the reader about the consequences of the dam's project in Patuca River despite a certain shyness in establishing her position. See for example the introductory sentence of her letter:

[date]

Dear editor:

*Through this letter I want to talk about the project Patuca III, this is located in...*

Further on she intends to let the reader know about the position of the government towards the project in a form of counterargument and she then introduces her claim or position towards the issue, but not sufficiently strong (see statement in italics).

...According to the government and the mayor of Patuca, this project will change the life of many people because in addition to generating electrical energy, it also means the creation of five thousands jobs for Honduran people. *I think [it] is also important to know that this project can cause some disadvantages to the environment and the people who live on the edge of the Patuca River.*

It is our interpretation that Rebeca has not been able to fully adapt her declarative awareness of purpose and the rhetorical situation to task demands and therefore she has not been able to apply conditional knowledge to meet the expectations of the reader. In addition to this, she uses language that is not conventionally persuasive and that weakens her tone of voice and ethos (see expressions like *I want to talk about* or *I think*). Her average score on the criterion of *voice* is relatively low (10.5). So far, Rebeca does not seem to have transferred knowledge of content in the formulation of a claim and knowledge of structure at organizing and presenting the letter. This is in discrepancy with findings on procedural awareness to write effectively within the genre (see example 36, section 5.2.2.2, Chapter 5). In the next excerpt, she proceeds to develop the claim by providing further evidence, reasons and warrants in the following manner:

[It] is important to remember that Platano river is a world heritage declared by UNESCO, and represents our means of living and communicating and these natural resources are of global importance and are now threatened with this project. The inhabitants of La Moskitia in Olancho have made a protest because they do not agree with this project due to the consequences on the forest and wildlife habitat, medicinal plants and the loss of indigenous people and culture....

When interpreting letters to the editor, Rebeca revealed procedural awareness of rhetorical appeals to write convincing letters (see example 18, section 6.2.1, Chapter 6). She has made an attempt to transfer this knowledge, especially to appeal to logos and pathos. However, this awareness has not been effectively applied because of the lack of full citations, lack of cohesion within the text, and lack of development of cited material. See the following paragraph:

...The government says that this project will benefit us because Patuca III fuel is replaced by Focil [fossil], in contrast, MOPAWI, identified risks and danger and loss of biodiversity, increasing colonization and deforestation with the opening of roads to access the region and I think this will do more damage to the climate change caused by deforestation of forests. Leatherback Lorenzo chairman Tawahka people said, "The River is our life".

Although presentation of evidence is relevant to the claim, argumentation is neither complete nor convincing enough. Thus, she has not been able to transfer procedural awareness of rhetorical appeals and knowledge of argumentation effectively. The next excerpt shows the closing of her letter:

I think the damage to the forest may be more harmful and irreversible and it is important that we take care of our forest and our culture because it has much more value for Notre (?) inhabitants of the earth.

Sincerely,

Towards the end, she keeps a respectful tone of voice and tries to call people to action by appealing to pathos, but she keeps using verbs that are not powerful enough to convince citizens of taking responsibility on the issue. In terms of grammar and mechanics, she has been evaluated much lower by both raters (10.5/15), which is probably related to her low language proficiency level. Grammar problems show long sentences with lots of comma splices and omission of the pronoun “it”; presence of fragments, run-on sentences, misspelled words, and punctuation problems when using cohesive devices. All in all, it seems that Rebeca has been able to transfer declarative and procedural awareness of concepts and rhetorical features into her writing of letters to the editor, but to a certain extent, she fails at adapting this knowledge to meet the expectations of readers and task goals. It is worth mentioning that in our findings on monitoring cognitive performance, she reported difficulties at understanding and applying genre-based concepts and strategies when analyzing and writing letters to the editor. She was classified as a low-monitoring learner due to her reliance on teacher’s scaffolding to repair cognitive difficulties.

Our final case is Doris, who shows a high motivation at using letters to the editor (see example 3, section 5.2.3.1, Chapter 5). At first, she reported to have difficulties with the genre-based task on letters to the editor as revealed in her declarative awareness of task (see example 10, section 5.2.1.1, Chapter 5). In her writing, Doris displays declarative genre awareness in her understanding of the genre, scene and the rhetorical situation —purpose, topic, role of reader and writer. We can observe this in her interest of using letters to the editor to express her opinion on the topic of Patuca III, her attempts to state a claim, and her concern about raising awareness of Honduran society to support indigenous people affected by this project (see example 14, section 6.2.1, Chapter 6). In her introductory paragraph, she fails at applying knowledge of structure and format.

The construction of the Patuca III Hydroelectric Dam is a Honduran government project. This project has been established to generate clean energy, as we know Honduras has no project that provide[s] energy, for this reason there are constant blackouts. *In the same way this big project has its disadvantages because of the communities that are benefit from Patuca river, especially native people who live there,* according to 2005 statistics Gracias a Dios department had an estimated population of 76, 278 including families that usually have 5 to 10 children

Despite her motivation and interest in elevating her voice, Doris has not yet been able to state a strong and powerful claim. She was scored with 10.5/15 by the raters in the item of *focus of the*

*claim*, which suggests her weaknesses as stating a claim. In the remaining introduction she attempts to provide further evidence to support her opinion, but problems with grammar and punctuation weaken language style and cohesiveness at connecting ideas. Despite this problem, meaning and intelligibility remain clear:

... and they will be the most affected because in the winter the towns that were not flooded it will be flood because the soil will be saturated and could not absorb more water, in the same way will be droughts in the summer and will cause crops decrease because it won't have water. Will also be affected other water reserves which are maintained with Patuca River, an example is Brus Lagoon and Rapa.

She makes efforts to explain reasons and establish some warrants, which strengthens ethos. However, she omits citations to support data. In the next paragraph, she improves at providing credible sources and relevant evidence on the issue, yet she relies too heavily on the cited material and does not seem to be able to integrate her own ideas into the text:

"The river is our life", says Lorenzo Tinglas, president of the Tawahka people's governing council on the website...(Cultural Survival.org.website). Indigenous villagers who live along the Patuca's banks depend on the river for their lives and livelihoods. It is their only means of transportation and communication through the vast, roadless Moskitia. Dams would obstruct commerce and trade for thousands of people. On stretches of the river between the dams, the flows, currents, and channels would be altered..."These impacts will be fatal for the survival of the Tawahka as a unique people," says their elected leader, Lorenzo Tinglas.

She shows some difficulties with the APA style when using in-text citations, a common academic weakness in novice writers within the program. Her voice throughout the text seems to be involved but not strongly enough. In fact, she closes her letter by making a plea in the second person, a feature that distances herself from the readers and makes the letter weak in terms of persuading people to take actions towards the issue. Voice is one of the lowest scored items, according to the raters (see table above). The conclusion of the letter is stated as follows:

Please [,] answer the call of the united indigenous people of the Moskitia: tell the Honduran government you stand with them against construction of the Patuca III Hydroelectric dam.

She shows grammar problems, such as unstructured sentences divided mostly by commas, use of fragments or insertion of very short sentences, omission of subjects at the beginning of sentences (a common problem in Miskito students learning English), problems with language use, and verb tenses, among others. These problems are common in the composition of novice writers in the

TEFL program. In general, and in accordance with her critical reading of letters to the editors and reports on metacognitive genre awareness, she has not been able to transfer much procedural nor conditional awareness into her own writing. In our findings on monitoring cognitive performance, she acknowledges her difficulties at analyzing and writing about and within the genre, but then she reports to have made improvement (see example 6, section 5.3.1.2, Chapter 5).

### 7.2.2 Composition of cover letters and résumés

Table 7.3 summarizes learners' average scores on the task of cover letters and résumés.

**Table 7.3** Scores on learners' cover letters and résumés

Student's name	Grading Rubric					Average score
	Presentation, format and structure 1-15	Opening, introduction and objective 1-10	Content 1-20	Technical writing and rhetorical knowledge 1-30	Grammar and mechanics 1-15	
Rebeca	8	8	17	22.5	12.5	68
José	13	9	18	27.5	10	77.5
Ricardo	14	10	15.5	25.5	11	76
Doris	13.5	8	15	23	13	72.5

In this task, José seems to be the strongest writer in agreement with findings on critical reading of cover letters and résumés where he was the most productive learner at analyzing features (see details in section 6.2.2, Chapter 6). José revealed a great deal of declarative awareness of concepts and strategies and has been able to transfer this knowledge onto his interpretation of the genre in a procedural and conditional manner. He was concerned about using his knowledge of rhetorical patterns, in particular rhetorical appeals, to write effectively within the genre. At analyzing his samples of cover letters and résumé, we observe that he has been able to transfer declarative knowledge of genre-based concepts and the rhetorical situation e.g., knowledge of the rhetorical purpose, setting, topic, and role of reader and writer in agreement with his interpretation of the genre (see example 1, section 6.2.2, Chapter 6). He also used this knowledge strategically to write a persuasive cover letter as revealed in his analysis (see example 2, section 6.2.2).

[Headletter with inside address]

[date]

[Addressee name]

[Salutation]

I am delighted to apply for a position as high school teacher at the [name of local bilingual school], which has many years of impeccable teaching reputation. I have recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazan. Despite my recent graduation, I am sure I have the necessary qualifications to surpass the standards already established by your educational institution. I guarantee that having me working in your school will represent an enhancement for the school teaching prestige.

Apart from using knowledge of the rhetorical situation and the genre to set up a persuasive cover letter, José applies knowledge of rhetorical patterns—content, format and structure—to organize and present the cover letter in strategic manner (see example 3, section 6.2.2). This can be observed in his opening of the letter and inclusion of features such as headletter with inside address, addressee name, date, salutation and teaching position applied for in the first paragraph (see format above). In the next paragraph, he continues with qualifications and skills:

The enclosed resume highlights my career achievements and indicates my interest toward the educational field. I have been tutoring students of different bilingual schools and adults from various language academies which have expressed their thanks for the priceless teaching I have shared with them. I have also worked with students of the English Program in extensive reading at the reading corner of the UPNFM, which has provided me with meaningful input about the role extensive reading exerts in the learning process.

In the excerpt above, José displays conditional knowledge at adapting knowledge of rhetorical appeals to the context of the task. This can be observed in his attachment of the résumé as a means of proof for his qualifications and career achievements relevant to the educational field, a key feature that enhances Logos and Ethos (see example 4, section 6.2.2) for awareness of rhetorical appeals). In addition to this, José has displayed conditional awareness of the concept of audience and the rhetorical purpose of the genre as well as cross-genre awareness in the effective use of both genres. This is in agreement with findings in critical reading of cover letters and résumés as reported in chapter 6. He closes with the conventional feature of requesting an appointment to the employer:

I would enjoy the opportunity to meet with you personally to discuss my qualifications and credentials in further detail, as I am confident I would be a valuable addition to your academic team....

[Closing]

[Name of applicant]

[Enclosures]

His average score for presentation, format and structure, as seen in the table above, is 13 a rather high score. With reference to the résumé (see appendix K), the presentation is consistent with the cover letter. However, he does not seem to be very strategic at using knowledge of rhetorical patterns to structure the résumé. The content looks appropriate for the requirements of the task and the purpose of the rhetorical situation. His use of language and diction also reflects José's metacognitive genre awareness in the application of specialized lexicon according to the field, e.g., *tutoring, extensive reading, learning process, reading corner, student assessment and evaluation*. In short, José seems to have transferred declarative, procedural and conditional awareness into his writing of cover letter and résumés to a great extent. This is also confirmed through his scores on the genre-based writing tasks.

According to rating scores, Ricardo was one of the strongest writers for this task. This is also in agreement with the critical reading task of the same genre. When interpreting cover letters and résumés, he revealed a great deal of declarative awareness of rhetorical patterns, in particular those related to content and format. In addition to this, he seemed to reflect strategically upon the use of cover letters to grab the attention of the interviewer. He seems to have transferred this knowledge into his own letter, yet he does not succeed at introducing himself strongly or persuasively to the reader:

[Headletter with inside address]

[date]

[Addressee name]

[Salutation]



I am pleased to apply for an entry level position as a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in [name of local bilingual school]. I have a Bachelor's [degree] of Education [from] Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazan with over 10 years of classroom experience and the desire to provide all students with excellent education. As you can see I have a good educational background and I am also proficient in humanity and social science courses.

His declarative awareness of format and style as shown in his critical reading of cover letters (see example 12, section 6.2.2) contrasts with Ricardo's difficulties at managing content. He, for example, misplaces information by including the sentence "As you can see..." before letting the reader know about attachment of the résumé, a feature that leads to confusion and lack of coherence between content and demonstration of qualifications. In the next paragraph, Ricardo provides qualifications and skills, but seems to devote a great deal of attention to one particular type of skills without considering if these skills were actually relevant for the demands of the job. In this sense, Ricardo does not seem to have transferred much procedural awareness of rhetorical patterns—content and rhetorical appeals—into his own writing as revealed in chapter 6 (see examples 13, 14 & 15, section 6.2.2). Cross-genre awareness is seen in the following way:

As my resume demonstrates, I have spent a lot of time ~~hours~~ with students who required extra tuition. I have found my role both fulfilling and rewarding, I have had wonderful opportunities to work with diverse institutions including those with learning disabilities programs. Such programs have been oriented to stimulating kids with learning exeptionalities, especially kids with ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder) syndrome.

In the closing part of the letter, Ricardo includes expectations for an appointment and refers to the enclosures as well as contact details, finishing up his letter in an expected and appropriate manner. See for example:

I enclose my resume for your attention and I would like to thank you in advance for your time. If you should require any further information or clarification please do not hesitate to contact me at the above telephone number.

[Closing]

[Name of applicant]

[Enclosures]

His résumé is consistent with the cover letter and follows a similar format to the one presented by José. Learners were given the freedom to adapt the format and style to their own likes and personality as long as they met the requirements of the task. With regard to language and diction, referred to in the rubric as technical writing, Ricardo struggles at using specialized jargon or

conventional language as it is used in the educational field. This is not in agreement with his procedural awareness to write effectively within the genre as revealed in Chapter 5. For example, “Use of different methodologies” instead of “Variety of teaching methodologies”, “Parent-teacher conferences” instead of “Good rapport and communication skills with parents”, “Role-playing” instead of “Active learning strategies”. Some other problems with format and linguistic features include omission of phone number, objective not written in first person, too much space between sections and a few misspelled words. In general, Ricardo has applied declarative awareness of genre into his writing to a great extent and procedural awareness to a lesser extent. He has mostly failed at applying procedural awareness of content, format and style as required by task demands. We also observe that he has not made the necessary adaptations of the text to the context of the situation or to his personal background in order to meet the requirements of the task. This suggests very little application of conditional knowledge which is in alignment with our findings on metacognitive genre awareness and critical reading skills. We also find that this is in alignment with Negretti’s findings (2012) about task perception and metacognitive regulation.

Doris revealed application of declarative, procedural, and conditional awareness at interpreting this genre. More specifically, she showed procedural awareness of rhetorical patterns to write effective cover letters and résumés in her interpretation of genre (see examples 19, 20, 21, 22 & 23, section 6.2.2). At analyzing her writing, she has transferred declarative knowledge of genre and the rhetorical situation at using the genre with the intended purpose of introducing herself to a potential employer. This is in agreement with findings on declarative and strategic awareness at using cover letters in Chapter 5. See the introduction to her letter:

[headletter with inside address]

[Date]

[Addressee name]

[Salutation]

I am pleased to apply for an entry level position as a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher in [name of school] elementary school. I have obtained a Bachelor of Education in the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional

Francisco Morazan with no experience of education because I am a recent graduate, but I really have the desire and the knowledge to provide all students with an excellent education.

In our findings about Doris' procedural awareness of the rhetorical function of the genre as well as the rhetorical situation (see example 11, section 5.2.2.1, Chapter 5), she reflected upon the importance of being honest at providing information to the future employer. This feature has been successfully transferred into her own writing through her statement about being a recent graduate and therefore not counting on the required teaching experience. This is a common characteristic to most TEFL learners in the program, the reason for which they have to be very strategic at the moment of writing cover letters and résumés. Despite Doris' honesty and accountability as a professional, which shows essential values in the educational field, she fails at using her knowledge of rhetorical patterns and interpretation of these strategically (see examples 20, 21, 22 & 23, section 6.2.2, Chapter 6).

I enclose my resume for your attention and I would like to thank you in advance for your time. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above telephone number.

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

[Closing]

[Name of applicant]

[Enclosure]

Some of her rhetorical problems is that, first, she failed at missing basic information about the institution and how she came to know about the teaching position. Second, she has not been able to state her qualifications, strengths, values or assets in order to convince the employer that she is the right person for the job given that she does not have enough teaching experience. Third, she does not provide further details that makes the reader feel compelled to read the résumé. However, in the closing part of the letter, she includes a statement about expectations for a future meeting or appointment showing knowledge of conventions to close a cover letter. Her average score for content is 15 points out of 20, which indicates a very good performance.

With regard to her résumé, she does use it consistently with the cover letter for she has not been able to provide information about her skills or qualifications that leads to further reading of the résumé in a logical way. She reveals cross-genre awareness in using both genres as complementary to each other though. Her inclusion of relevant sections like objectives, academic training, areas of teaching proficiency, among others, reveals awareness of content and treatment of it due to their relevance to the job. However, knowledge of content has not been used convincingly nor consistently across both genres.

Raters have scored her *opening, introduction and objective* with 8, suggesting a very good performance. She then fails at calling the readers' attention which shows difficulties at meeting the purpose of the genre. A few problems are observed with format in her inclusion of computer skills following the references and the use of a different font from the conventional Times New Roman 12'. Conversely, Doris' grammar and mechanics as well as use of technical writing are appropriate, but judging these is difficult since use of technical writing is kept to a minimum. Her average score for the items of *technical writing and rhetorical knowledge* places her within a very good performance with 23 out of 30 pts.

We can conclude that Doris has been able to transfer declarative awareness into her writing of cover letters and résumés in terms of genre concepts, aspects of the rhetorical situation and patterns. Yet she has struggled at transferring knowledge of rhetorical patterns strategically, particularly those relevant to content, format and structure. Her lack of adaptations to the context of the situation and particular requirements of the task reflects difficulties at applying conditional knowledge as well. The lack of strategic thinking appears to contradict our findings on metacognitive genre awareness and analysis of cover letters and résumés where she revealed a considerable amount of procedural and conditional awareness. Something interesting is that despite the difficulties shown in her writing, she reports to have gained confidence in her academic skills (see examples 6 & 11, section 5.3.1.2, Chapter 5).

We will now refer to Rebeca. She reports a great deal of declarative awareness of genre-based concepts, including awareness of difficulties at learning such concepts (see example 7, section 5.2.1.1; example 19, 24 & 28, section 5.2.1.2, Chapter 5). She also reported awareness of strategies to perform genre-analysis tasks within cover letters and résumés and awareness of using this knowledge to make decisions about writing within the genre (see example 1 & 19, section 5.2.2.1; example 29, section 5.2.2.2). Her conditional awareness though revealed an

embryonic stage with very little or no clear adaptations of genre-based knowledge into her analysis and interpretation of texts except for her intentions of using cover letters in responding to potential workplace situations (see example 2, section 5.2.3.1). In her writing, she displays declarative awareness of genre and the rhetorical situation—purpose, topic, and role of readers and writers—all in a succinct manner. See the introduction and opening of her letter:

[Inside address]

[Date]

[Addressee name]

[Salutation]

In response to your advertisement in La Tribuna newspaper dated November 15, 2011. I am studying at the UPNFM and I would like to apply for the teaching position with your school.

Rebeca has properly set up her cover letter by including the source of information about the teaching position; this feature helps to establish a relationship of trust with the reader, thereby reinforcing ethos. This is in agreement with her procedural awareness of rhetorical appeals as shown in her critical reading of cover letters (see example 29, section 6.2.2, Chapter 6). However, her introductory statement is incomplete. Obviously, this lack of attention disturbs the reader and threatens the ethos she had almost established before. She quickly introduces the purpose of her letter very precisely suggesting application of declarative awareness of genre (see example 27, section 6.2.2, Chapter 6). In the remainder of the letter she describes her qualifications and expectations for future contact:

My knowledge and skills make me the perfect person for this position. I am committed to providing students with a dynamic and interesting learning environment in which they can grow and develop. In addition, enthusiasm and passion for teaching will make a positive contribution to your school

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application and review my resume. I look forward to hearing from you.

[Closing]

[Name of applicant]

The structure, organization and use of content reveal Rebeca's procedural awareness of rhetorical patterns to a great extent in agreement with her critical reading of cover letters and résumés (see example 30, section 6.2.2). She introduces her qualifications and skills precisely, but misses details about her background and qualifications to give the reader further opportunities to assess her suitability for the job. On the other hand, her short and precise style makes her writing attractive and easy to read. The use of adjectives such as "perfect" may indicate an overrated appreciation of skills, which on the one hand, is appropriate because it shows self-confidence, but on the other hand, it may be interpreted as presumptuous in the Honduran context. This feature may compromise ethos. It appears that Rebeca needs to become aware of pragmatic aspects of language and content based on the cultural background of the reader and the local discourse community in order to describe herself in an interesting yet believable manner. It is our interpretation that Rebeca has succeeded at calling the attention of the reader and has followed conventions of form and structure throughout her letter, but she overlooks some important aspects. One of them is the lack of reference to the enclosure of the résumé. Her average score for the items of *presentation, format and structure* is 8, indicating a very good performance.

Her use of linguistic features does not show major problems, for the most part, she uses clear and intelligible language; her tone is serious and the register is formal. This is again in agreement with her strategic awareness of rhetorical patterns (see example 31, section 6.2.2). She has been scored on the item of *technical writing and rhetorical knowledge* with 25 and 20 pts, placing her within a very good performance.

Another aspect that shows her lack of strategic awareness is the presentation and structure of her résumé since it does not prove to be as interesting and convincing as expected. This contradicts our reports about her procedural awareness of strategies to write effectively within the genre especially when she refers to using genre analysis strategies to make decisions about writing cover letters (see example 19, section 5.2.2.1, Chapter 5). One more problem is language use, since she used Spanish to describe her educational degrees background, forgetting that the intended context in which the genre occurs is an English speaking setting. In addition, her description of professional experience is poorly developed and this is probably due to the lack of teaching experience.

All in all, Rebeca seems to have applied declarative awareness and procedural awareness to a great extent into her own writing in agreement with findings on metacognitive genre awareness and critical reading of the genre. It is visible that she has struggled at using knowledge of rhetorical patterns in a conditional manner, in particular rhetorical appeals, content, format and language. This seems to be in agreement with her emerging conditional awareness and her rating score within the task. There are also contradictions between her reported procedural awareness to write effectively within the genre and her actual writing especially when it refers to organizing, structuring and presenting her résumé. In addition, she displays problems with grammar, mechanics, and spelling which are more evident in her résumé than in the cover letter. This may be in alignment with her language proficiency level. In our reports on monitoring cognitive performance, however, she suggests to to have gained self-confidence at performing within this genre.

### 7.2.3 Composition of critical response papers

This was the last genre-based task learners performed in the intervention. The average scores are shown in table 7.4.

**Table 7. 4** Scores on learners' critical response papers

Student's name	Grading Rubric					Average score
	Claim 1-18	Evidence/ Reasons 1-18	Warrants 1-18	Counter- argument/ Rebuttal 1-18	Voice 1-18	
Rebeca	15	12	9	9	9	54
José	16.5	15	13.5	13.5	15	73.5
Ricardo	15	12	12	13.5	17.5	71
Doris	15	15	13.5	9	9	61.5

From the table, it can be seen that Ricardo and José are stronger than Doris and Rebeca at writing within this genre showing a similar pattern to previous writing tasks. Previous results on metacognitive genre awareness reported that José reveals a great deal of declarative and procedural awareness of genre-based strategies and rhetorical patterns specifically about using rhetorical appeals to write persuasively. This type of awareness was observed across all tasks and

genres (see example 6, section 5.2.1.1; examples 2 & 19, section 5.2.2.1; example 33, section 5.2.2.2, Chapter 5). His strategic awareness appears to have some implications on conditional awareness when using argumentative essays (see examples 17 & 20, section 5.2.3.1, Chapter 5). Nevertheless, he did not reveal instances of flexible use of strategies that would have implications for writing within the genre. In his critical reading of argumentative essays, he demonstrates declarative awareness of the rhetorical situation and concepts of argumentation and logical reasoning (see examples 9, 10, 11 & 12, section 6.3.3, Chapter 6). Moreover, he displays strategic awareness at using knowledge of content in order to write controversial, debatable and arguable claims (see example 13, section 6.3.3).

In his actual critical response paper, José responds to the essay “The absolute necessity of college-level writing courses.” The introductory paragraph contains a general background of the topic and the aim stated by the author in an attempt to set the context of the task. Generally, critical review papers begin with a short introduction to the article or paper reviewed, the author’s main claim and, to establish the line of argumentation, the reviewer’s evaluation of the text. In this case, José seems to have applied declarative awareness of content and structure at drafting his introduction, but he has not been able to use this knowledge strategically for he relies too much on the original text instead of providing a broader view of the topic and then relate it to the author’s main claim. He has not evaluated the original text and for this reason there is no counterargument provided. It is possible that he has not been able to do it because this genre was not previously analyzed in the same way as they did with argumentative essays (a more detailed discussion will be provided on this issue in Chapter 8). See part of the introductory paragraph:

Reading the Michigan Corpus of upper-levels student papers....It explains that writing is a skill and as such is very representative in every course taken at any educational institution. Therefore, writing courses should be mandatory and as a result the student would obtain a certain background by the time they get to college....*Nowadays, writing and writing well is a skill that is an essential requisite.*

In the next paragraph, José is more strategic at applying knowledge of rhetorical patterns—content and structure—in his attempt to summarize the material of the original text:

He states that writing is a technique and that the *heritage* dictionary defines it as....He states that this definition means that one has [an] advanced degree of competence and this is developed by continuous drilling. Writing is and will be a key component in higher education. It also says that writing is....He says he found difficulties taken courses at the University of [name of university] because....He argues that secondary schools are not carrying out their role when it comes to writing. Lastly, he agrees that writing is not easy, but if it is encouraged it may be.



He follows academic conventions used to organize and structure critical papers by summarizing the author's position and the main ideas used by him/her to support his/her claims. In the process of summarizing the material, we observe that José has done it appropriately, but he has not included citations. This weakens credibility of the writer, a type of knowledge that José has shown before. He has been able to use a great variety of reporting verbs, e.g., *states*, *agrees*, *says* and *argues*. This shows awareness of linguistic features relevant to academic genres in agreement with certain strategic awareness he revealed about language and diction (see example 17, section 6.3.3, Chapter 6). However, he compromises language style by overusing noun clauses. In this sense, José has not become aware of the need to adapt knowledge of linguistic features to the expectations and demands of the audience as required within the task. This ability suggests the application of conditional genre awareness, but also knowledge of advanced language structures. Despite José's proficiency level, he shows difficulties in adapting the language to the context of the task.

In the following excerpt, he proceeds to evaluate the author's claim and introduces his opinion in a clear and strong manner (see statement in italics):

Writing has been a great concern in universities, due to the lack of competence students **has** by the time student get enrolled in this high academic setting....I believe that the arguments of the student who wrote this paper are very well stated and [provides] son['s] evidence that support the claims that he/she makes, but I strongly consider that he/she lacks **of** evidences. *In my opinion, a paper that does not provide citation and enough reference is not reliable.*

Here, José has displayed critical thinking and knowledge of argumentation at assessing the author's claim in agreement with critical awareness revealed in his interpretation of the genre (see example 18, section 6.3.3). Despite this, we observe a lack of pragmatic awareness in responding to the author's claim. Instead of reviewing the author's ideas or points of view on the topic, he seems to critique the author himself/herself. Becoming aware of pragmatic issues requires a great deal of rhetorical considerations on the side of the learner that, again, connects to metapragmatic awareness. In the next excerpt, he proceeds to develop his reasons and warrants to support his own claim:

Some of the evidence that the written piece should provide are statistics and some investigation done **on** the field of education; in this occasion writing. For instance, according to Arthur A "The schools are cutting back to teach Reading and Math, but writing is not mentioned. Despite national concern for overall student achievement, writing may be in danger of dropping from attention" (2006). This research may **evidence** the necessity of spurring writing in schools in our times. Some of the statistics that come to

confirm the necessity for writing are stated by the BlogEduify/Write faster, (2009) "About one student in five produces completely unsatisfactory prose, about 50 percent meet "basic" requirements, and only one in five can be called "proficient." This clearly shows the deficit that students have in writing.

Through this, José seems to have effectively applied strategic awareness of academic argumentation. He has used his knowledge of reasons and warrants to assess the author's claim in a logical manner. His counterargument is actually oriented to the way the author has presented his/her claim and his/her lack of evidence to effectively support his/her position. It is our interpretation that he has also applied conditional genre awareness since he has responded to the weaknesses of the author by taking into account not only rhetorical but also content requirements about argumentation in academic scenes. Moreover, his quoted citations, although cited incorrectly, display awareness about using rhetorical appeals effectively in agreement with José's metacognitive genre awareness. Some more elaboration on his rebuttal would be required to present a more solid argumentation against the author's lack of evidence. In the conclusion of his critical paper, he states the following:

In short, I strongly believe that something cannot said if we do not have ~~the~~ enough evidence to support our arguments. I agree with most of the points that the writer states. However, I totally disagree in the way he supports his/her arguments. He lacks ~~of~~ credibility because of the poor way he states the evidence.

Even though José restates his counterargument in a very clear and strong manner, again, his discussion is directed to the author's weaknesses rather than to the author's argumentation. In general, José seems to have transferred a great deal of declarative awareness into his writing with applications of procedural awareness especially at using knowledge of content, format, structure and rhetorical appeals. With regard to conditional genre awareness, José does not apply it to a great extent but he succeeds at adapting his knowledge of rhetorical patterns—content and rhetorical appeals—to justify his position which reveals a significant achievement in his production of academic texts. He received high scores in the *statement of the claim* and moderately high scores in the use of *evidence/reasons*, and *voice*. According to his final rating score, he is the strongest writer within this genre and this is also consistent with ratings of previous genre-based tasks (see table above).

Ricardo was the most productive learner at analyzing features within argumentative essays. In addition, he demonstrated a great deal of declarative knowledge of concepts and strategies with some applications of procedural awareness. He did not reveal specific instances of

conditional awareness, which has been a pattern across genre-based tasks in his case (see details in section 6.3.3, Chapter 6). Ricardo's critical response paper is a response to the essay "Pixels and Print: Effect of the Digital Age on Children's Literature" by an anonymous undergraduate student. The following excerpt shows part of his introduction:

Technology is still the source of the immense development that people tend not to notice....It is obvious that technology is in all fields, technology provides opportunity to develop ~~in~~ human skills as the author of ...who is a English final year undergraduate of University of Michigan [fragment]. In her article she includes as a claim "The development of digital environment, including interactive books...has dramatically expanded the real of children's literature and has influenced the way children interact with reading and language" in its first paragraph; line number 10.

In his introduction, Ricardo seems to display declarative awareness of content and structure at organizing the introduction to the paper. However, he does not seem to be very strategic at elaborating it and/or revising it for grammar errors (see the fragment in line 3) and structure. He omits stating his position about the text or the author's main claim from the very beginning. Instead, his position is introduced in the next body paragraph:

However the writer of this article did not consider ~~ed~~ some disadvantages of these kind of **devises** and negative effects they produce, according to studies made by different researchers....In some cases e-books, Cds, DVDs are produced to be compatible for certain software which may not be available for all kinds of devices and certain hardware or software failure may affect them. It let that this kind of books and software are more easily to damage than printed book. Also this technology represents a cost of money since the beginning until all its useful life.

....All these electronic devices require power so they have to be chargeable not letting to carry for long time and not to spend time reading in a long and boring travels. Contrasting with the writer's opinion presented in her article, **on** the first paragraph of her article.

We can see that Ricardo opposes the author's main claim. However, he introduces some reasons without supporting them with citations or quotes, which obviously reflects a lack of strategic awareness at using rhetorical appeals. Even though Ricardo's position seems to be reasonable since access to digital media implies investment of money, his logical reasoning remains weak. Factors like cost of technology and technical incompatibilities are not presented strongly enough to shake the grounds of the main claim due to insufficient support and discussion.

In the next excerpts, he includes further reasons and warrants. This time, he seems to be more strategic at using knowledge of rhetorical appeals and content because of the use of quotations with citation of bibliographic material (quotation has just been indicated in brackets but not copied) and inclusion of relevant reasons and warrants. However, his justification of

warrants remains weak and is not valid enough to prove his argument. He also needs to provide stronger evidence in the form of facts, examples, and statistics and needs to prove the strengths of his warrants in a more elaborated manner to show that his claims are stronger than the authors’.

....My experience with both format of education in literature, reading from computer lacks the familiarity and comfort of reading from a book. A paper book can be opened and flipped through, while an electronic text is more difficult to navigate for reasons exposed before.

[supporting with quotation]...Critical points to consider include the following, technology requiring major changes in approaches by users generally does not succeed in improving students’ learning; since technology have been used in may cases in a wrong way. Kleiman, considered that technology must address critical goals and needs in order to be worth, also parents and teachers have to be careful in the way our children are using it. Since those devises (e-books, Cds, DVDs) may present bright colors, good graphic and interactivity with learners not mean the learning process is taking place or sometimes how reliable information it carries. Therefore, the decision to use technology should consider statements such as: which components need to be strengthened in my students or children,...

So far Ricardo has not shown to have transferred much procedural awareness into his writing. This contradicts earlier findings on implications of procedural knowledge about using logical reasoning in academic settings (see example 3, section 6.3.3) or using rhetorical appeals to establish strong arguments (see example 4, section 6.3.3). In the next and final excerpt, his discussion goes further and provides additional reasons and warrants in an attempt to prove his claim that technology can be detrimental to kids’ learning. However, he brings up new pieces of information that do not prove to be relevant to the author’s main claim nor to his previous discussion:

Identifying potential software, web resources, or other technologies that fit the strategies in the way every student learn can be challenged. I do not deny the influence and the revolution these devices have done in our world, but it amazes me how kids do math exercises in fifth grade through a sum machine. Increasing the laziness and decreasing our mental skills provoking a big dependence.

In general, Ricardo has transferred declarative awareness of content, format and structure in his presentation and organization of critical response papers. He has also shown procedural awareness although to a lesser extent. He shows lack of strategic and conditional awareness at developing and supporting his argumentation in a logical way. He struggles with using knowledge of rhetorical patterns, specifically content, structure, and rhetorical appeals effectively. In terms of conditional awareness, there are no clear examples in his analysis. This has been consistent with his performance so far since little adaptations or applications of genre knowledge have been observed to fulfill the purpose of the task. His rated scores indicate

relatively low performance in the use of *evidence/reasons*, *warrants*, and *counterargument/rebuttal*, but he seems to perform much better in terms of *statement of claim* and *use of voice*.

Doris reported a great deal of declarative and procedural awareness with implications in the rhetorical structure, organization and writing of argumentative papers. She did not show concrete applications of conditional awareness, except for her strong willingness to apply genre knowledge across a variety of academic tasks (see details in section 6.3.3). She also reported transfer of metacognitive knowledge to other academic contexts. However, she reported awareness of task difficulty at using argumentative essays (see example 19, section 6.3.3). In this task, she responded to the essay “The absolute necessity of college-level writing courses.” She introduces her response in the following way:

I agree with the essay..., I think that the student who took this essay Mike Rose’s article who wrote about the importance that the universities and colleges as institution of higher education should not only continue to offer writing courses, they should endorse and embrace teaching of them.

Doris has shown to have difficulties at organizing and structuring her introduction in a strategic manner. Some of her main problems are sentence structure and omission of important information such as the author’s background, introduction to the topic, and statement of her position towards the text. Although she summarizes the main claim, she does not state her position to help the reader understand the purpose of the writing. This appears to contradict Doris’ declarative awareness as shown in chapter 5; in reference to writing a good thesis and providing readers with some background of the issue to help them with the analysis (see example 23, section 6.3.3). In the next paragraph, she introduces her discussion with a personal example and attempts to establish her own claim:

...Take a good course of writing improve you as a person, because you have to make many researches; you have develop the skill of thinking and writing. You become more intellectual because of the researches that you read, you learn more grammatical rules, organized ideas and because you have to write as professional.

This shows that there is actually no critique of the text in Doris’ response but rather support to the original claim. This is acceptable within the genre, but the task also requires to establish a critique about possible weaknesses of the text. It is our interpretation that Doris has not critically read the rhetorical situation and therefore has misled the intended purpose within the genre. In

fact, she does not seem to have adapted her knowledge of argumentative essays to the particular requirements of the task, suggesting a lack of conditional awareness. In the next excerpt, she is more clear about her position and makes an attempt to support it with additional warrants, even though she does not report reliable or credible sources of information. This suggests a lack of strategic awareness at using rhetorical appeals and contradicts earlier findings on Doris' awareness at using rhetorical patterns to write effective arguments (see example 22, section 6.3.3):

I think college level writing should be mandatory, student's writing skills would be elevated to the level is necessary and it become easy to write when the teacher ask to the students make an essay; because writing and writing well is a skill that is an absolute necessity and it is important because in our professional life people judge your intelligence based off of written communications. I think writing development is a continuum.

In addition, we observe Doris' struggle to use grammar correctly. Some of her problems are run-on sentences, omission of subjects, infinitive verbs, and use of non-academic vocabulary like phrasal verbs. Her problems with punctuation are also noticeable. The next excerpt provides a further example of Doris' argumentation:

As Joseph M. Williams from University Chicago Writing Program wrote: Writing effectively however is a skill that can be learned, organize your writing, write for your audience, use simple language. You don't want the reader to need a dictionary to decipher what you are trying to say." I agree with this piece of writing because once we have organized our ideas, the main idea we can start writing a good essay or any writing using simple language without jargon because your purpose is to make your reader understand. Remember that good writing expresses who you are as person.

She has improved at providing quoted material and citations, but she has not cited the source of information correctly nor completely. This weakens Doris' ethos and logos in front of the reader. Her argument seems to be relevant, but again, it is poorly written and not very well developed. It needs to be supported with additional examples and evidence in order to strengthen her position. Evidently, Doris has not established a critique about the original text, she has instead agreed with the author's main claim and has attempted to persuade the reader towards a similar idea. Her concluding statement restate some of the main ideas, but at the same time it brings up a new position:

In final analysis; writing is important, it is not only write down an account of your ideas for other people to read, you have to explain yourself carefully, you cannot make the mental leaps you do when you talk with others or think about things by yourself. This makes writing probably the most challenging aspect of studying.

Doris has shown to have made a great effort in performing the task. She has revealed transfer of declarative awareness into her own writing and little procedural awareness. She reveals awareness of rhetorical patterns particularly about content, format, structure and rhetorical appeals, but she seems to fail at using these features conditionally. She appears to have misinterpreted the rhetorical problem due to the lack of understanding of the main purpose of the task. In addition, she shows difficulties at using correct grammar, mechanics and punctuation along the text, but manages to use sources of information in order to support her arguments. Although language style, structure and content have not been appropriately developed, she reveals a high level of critical thinking in presenting arguments and discussing them with relatively adequate reasoning.

Our last case is Rebeca. With respect to metacognitive genre awareness, she showed a great deal of declarative awareness of genre-based concepts and strategies to analyze argumentative papers. In addition, she demonstrated procedural genre awareness for writing within the genre, but in her actual genre-analysis task, these applications remained implicit. With regard to conditional awareness, she did not reveal concrete instances of application, something which has been a common pattern across her genre-based tasks (see details in section 6.3.3). Rebeca's critical paper is a response to the essay "Pixels and Print: Effect of the Digital Age on Children's Literature" which she introduces in the following way:

In an article in Michigan..., author talk about the Effects of ..., saying that this development positively influences the way children interact with reading and language. Technology has revolutionized the classroom and children's literature, but it is important to know that the children's literatures only through the use of technology prevents the development of other abilities of children and that this technology is not affordable for everyone.

In her introduction, Rebeca seems to display declarative awareness of the rhetorical situation, in particular the intended purpose since she has introduced her position about the author's claim from the beginning. Therefore, she seems to be aware that the primary purpose is to assess the author's main claim more than summarizing or restating it. This is in agreement with her declarative awareness of genre, scene and the rhetorical situation of argumentative papers as revealed in chapter 7 (see example 27, section 6.3.3). In addition, she reveals strategic awareness of rhetorical patterns—content and structure—to some extent in her organization of the introduction, although she does not sufficiently elaborate on the introduction of the topic. In the

next excerpt, she proceeds to develop her arguments in opposition to the main claim in the following manner:

Technology is changing not only children's literature, but also how they relate and communicate with others. The child spends time in this modern technology, having a passive education and loses the opportunity to interact with peers as they do when they read traditional books. "Children need to explore the world through their senses, because this way, they know how this works, and if they do it in a virtual space may lose their capacity for knowledge and interaction with others"(Villaroel, 1990)...While children are still involved only [in] the use of digital books they do not develop these important skills such as socialization that [is] achieved with the use of traditional books with which they share ideas listen to the teacher and are more interactive.

Rebeca seems to be very strategic at stating her argument by calling the attention of the reader and preparing him/her for the argumentation. She intends to refute the author's main claim and makes attempts to support her ideas with evidence. In addition, she includes a quote with parenthetical citation which appeals to logos. Apart from declarative awareness of rhetorical appeals, she seems to display procedural awareness at using and adapting cited material. This is in agreement with findings on declarative and procedural awareness about the genre, rhetorical situation and patterns, especially about content (see details in section 6.3.3). However, and as observed in previous cases, Rebeca has failed at developing the cited material properly. Besides, she has not refuted the author's main claim in light of the new evidence. This feature seems to weaken the writer's credibility and appeal to the reader's rational mind—ethos and logos. In the next paragraph, she continues to develop her claim:

Another important point to address is that one of the problems facing society and schools is poverty and lack of government support. Some schools have already begun to supplement traditional books for digital books and in the article the author talks about changing the traditional book format, but we must remember that economic problems and lack of government support for schools not all children have access to these modern books. "More than 4 million people worldwide have no access to technology" (OTI)...In addition, the schools need the government to help financially to train teachers, with this new technology, schools need more qualified personnel to meet the children's academic development. For example,...

Here we can confirm that she shows strategic awareness at stating the controlling idea. We can see her attempts to refute the author's point of view, but again, she misreads the author's arguments by stating that he/she suggests changing the traditional book format when this is not the case in the original text. Her arguments are not yet sufficiently supported with facts, statistics or examples and there is not a logical sequence that connects this new argumentation with previous one. It appears that Rebeca has not displayed transfer of sufficient procedural or



conditional knowledge to manage her critical response as it is expected within the genre. Although her counterarguments seem to be valid, at least to the Honduran context, she has not been able to discuss them with enough authority or knowledge of argumentation.

In general, Rebeca has shown a great deal of declarative awareness of concepts and genre-based strategies at writing within the genre. She has also shown some procedural awareness, especially at using knowledge of content, structure and rhetorical appeals, but she fails at using this knowledge conditionally. Basically, she has shown weaknesses at developing argumentation and using evidence strategically. She frequently misinterprets the author's claim by making *a priori* assumptions. Her voice seems to be monotonous throughout the paper and reflects a great deal of knowledge telling instead of knowledge transformation or critique. She seems to perform much better in stating the claim, according to the rating scores. There are frequent problems with grammar, especially with sentence structure and verb tenses. Overall, Rebeca has been the weakest writer based on rating scores and analysis of genre features.

### **7.3 Results on quantitative data**

In this section, we present some quantitative data based on a number of tests. The number of participants is too small to do meaningful statistical analyses. The quantitative data are merely meant to add information on the qualitative data. As explained, we designed a genre-based reading and composition test for measuring academic skills in the L2 from the perspective of genre-based theory and pedagogy. Results on inter-item reliability of pre-test writing items showed  $\alpha = .76$  and post-test writing items  $\alpha = .85$ ; altogether pre- and post-test writing items reached  $\alpha = .88$ , indicating a very good degree of internal consistency. Results on inter-rater reliability calculated on the basis of mean raters' alpha reached  $\alpha = .62$  for all writing items, which is significant for the purposes of the study.

The purpose of the writing section of the test was to evaluate the ability to produce a response to an argument essay in the L2 in the form of a critical response paper. Both pre- and post- writing tests contained the same format, but different argumentative essays. In order to complete the task, learners were required to apply genre knowledge to analyze the rhetorical situation, and particularly, the most common rhetorical patterns within the genre such as language style, format and structure, and to some extent, interpret those patterns. Regarding

academic argumentation, learners were expected to identify and write logical and valid arguments, to refute arguments, and provide clear and powerful evidence to support their position in the text.

The same raters involved in assessing critical reading items were involved in the assessment of writing responses. The rater's task this time consisted of reading learners' written responses and assessing the argumentation by using the pre-established criteria. The used criteria consisted of claim, evidence, warrant, counterargument/rebuttal, and voice. The rating scale was based on a range from 1-4 (1= very poor and 4= very good). 20 points were the maximum points to be obtained in this section. To avoid bias, students' names on each test were substituted by code numbers with pre-and post-written responses randomized. Raters were handed a package with 24 answers for both pre- and post-test reading and writing responses.

Descriptive results on pre-writing test scores show  $M = 37.25$  and  $SD = 7.31$ , out of a total of 60 points (the sum of the test score per each of the raters). The post-test writing scores show  $M = 37.04$  and  $SD = 7.36$ . One case, Shirley, was eliminated from the analysis because she missed the post-writing test. Again, due to the small sample size of the study, we did not apply inferential statistical tests, and therefore, we did not interpret differences between pre-test and post-test scores in terms of changes of knowledge and skills. Another reason for refraining from comparison is the fact that pre-and post-test involved two related but different genres (argument papers and critical response papers), and therefore, required two different tests. One of the factors that may have affected learners' performance on the assessment of writing is the design of the genre-based task in the written section, though. This and other issues with implications on the assessment of writing will be analyzed in Chapter 8 more specifically. We included a table to illustrate the results obtained by each of the learners in the pre-and post-writing test.

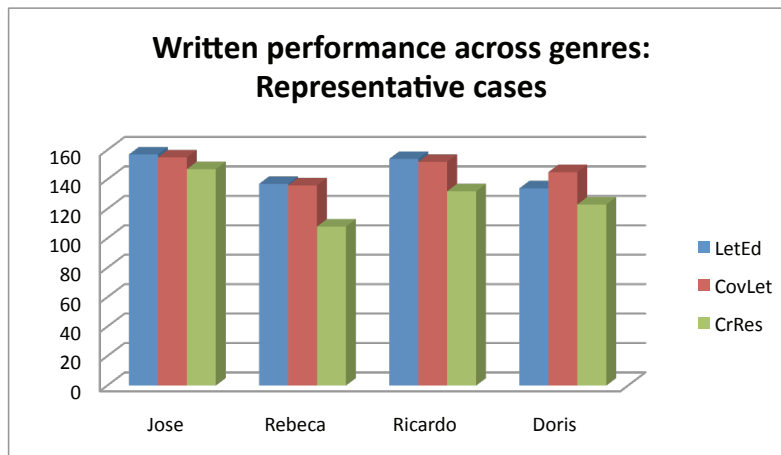
**Table 7.5** Results on individual pre- and post-writing test scores.

<b>Student</b>	<b>Writing Pre-test</b>	<b>Writing Post-Test</b>
<b>Rebeca</b>	34	28
<b>Doris</b>	43	48
Roberto	37	42
Juan	42	41
<b>José</b>	46	46
<b>Ricardo</b>	35	31

Zulema	40	38
Rosa	37	30
Armando	49	42
Rocio	35	37
Whitney	20	27

In general, learners show low levels of written performance. Whitney and Rebeca, for example, obtained the lowest scores whereas Doris and José obtained some of the highest ones. It can also be observed that learners perform at varying levels. This can be visually observed in the bar graph below which illustrates the individual writing performance of our representative cases across tasks. The varied writing performance has been confirmed throughout our qualitative data as well. In addition, lower written performance is observed within the genre of critical response papers across our representative cases. Within the representative cases, José shows the strongest performance. He was classified as a high-monitoring learner according to our qualitative data and was placed as a high-intermediate learner according to the MEPT. Rebeca, on the other hand, shows the weakest writing performance. She was one of the learners with the lowest linguistic profile from the group and was classified as a low-monitoring learner according to qualitative data.

**Figure 7.1** Performance across genre tasks of representative cases



### 7.3.1 Complementary analysis on the reliability of reading and writing test items

Previous results on inter-item reliability of the reading and writing test suggested good internal consistency, but when compared with writing items, reading items showed lower internal consistency. Whereas inter-item reliability for combined pre-test reading items showed a coefficient of  $\alpha=.78$  after removal of low-correlated items, writing items reached a coefficient of  $\alpha=.88$  without removal. Inter-rater reliability, on the other hand, proved to be higher for reading items with a mean rater alpha of  $\alpha=.75$  than writing items with  $\alpha=.62$ . In addition, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  Test on all raters' scores per reading item resulted in  $\alpha=.64$  and the sum of all reading items per rater that of  $\alpha=.88$ . Writing items showed the opposite effect on raters with a coefficient of  $\alpha=.80$  for all raters' per writing item and  $\alpha=.75$  for the sum of all writing items per rater.

According to these results, if we look at the particular effect of reading items, consistency and thus reliability tend to decrease; however, raters' agreement seems to be high in reference to reading items, especially when analyzed all together. Writing ratings show the opposite results, though. These results may indicate that the writing items are seen as measuring different aspects of writing performance by raters. As result, we suggest that the writing test applied in this study should be further validated for future studies.

### 7.4 Summary of findings

Analyses of writing samples' scores indicate that learners perform at a similar stage within letters to the editor and cover letters and résumés, but their performance within critical response papers is lower. Probably the lower performance on this task is due to its complexity. When observing learners' writing performance, it is found that the stronger writers are those who showed higher levels of generic features and therefore reported higher levels of critical reading skills and metacognitive genre awareness.

Learners display metacognitive genre awareness in their writing tasks to varying degrees and in different ways. When analyzing applications of the different types of metacognitive knowledge into learners' own writing, we find consistency with descriptions of metacognitive genre awareness and/or critical reading skills. However, discrepancies among reported metacognitive awareness, analysis of academic texts and writing performance are also found

regularly. Learners show awareness of a particular type or understanding of features, but they are not able to transfer such knowledge into their actual writing. Results on transfer of metacognitive awareness show that learners display a great deal of declarative awareness of concepts and strategies when writing academically. Generally, they seem to have a good understanding of genre-based concepts and the rhetorical situation—purpose, the role of readers and writers, setting, and topic— and rhetorical patterns. In addition, learners demonstrate the ability to interpret patterns and establish connections between those and the context where communication takes place. Nevertheless, in a few cases, understanding of contextual aspects of writing fail due to the lack of comprehension of the rhetorical purpose of the genre in use. This aspect can be related to students' perception of task (see Negretti, 2012, and a detailed discussion in Ch. 8 about this issue).

We have also found that learners apply procedural genre awareness across tasks in different and varied ways. They commonly apply knowledge of content, format, structure, rhetorical appeals, and language into their organization, structure and drafting of texts. However, considerable variation at applying procedural awareness within and across learners is observed. Learners can apply strategies within a particular writing task or situation, but then fail at applying the same strategies in another task, situation or even in a different stage within the same task. It is visible that learners make significant attempts to apply academic and rhetorical strategies into their own writing. For example, they use the APA style to organize their papers, state claims, provide evidence by using facts, examples or details, use knowledge of rhetorical patterns to write their papers or use knowledge of rhetorical appeals to persuade the reader. Yet learners struggle to use strategies effectively as required by the task or expectations within the genre. This behavior has important implications for their ability to transfer conditional awareness into more complex writing tasks.

Learners often fail to adapt genre-based knowledge to their particular needs, the needs of the reader or the demands of the task; thus, very little transfer of conditional awareness is observed. In fact, conditional awareness is the least applied of all three types of knowledge in our data. This is for the most part in agreement with findings in metacognitive genre awareness and critical reading of texts, where most learners show emerging conditional awareness. There are a few cases of succesful applications of conditional thinking, though. For example, some learners use specialized jargon or technical vocabulary and adapt it to the topics or the audience being

addressed or use rhetorical appeals appropriately in the use of citations or quotations to attack a claim. The most common difficulties at using and adapting metacognitive awareness effectively are observed when having to set up good argumentation either to defend an opinion or to critique a claim, to use reliable and sufficient evidence to support claims, to organize ideas logically according to the stated claim, or to adapt language to the characteristics of the task and the audience. A positive outcome throughout most of the cases is the gained confidence in learners' academic skills and critical awareness of genre in relation to contexts of situation.



## **Chapter 8**

### **Discussion and conclusions**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the ways in which a genre-awareness approach and metacognition contributed to developing metacognitive genre awareness and how this translates into reading and writing skills in L2 learners. For this purpose we set out three related research questions. Our first question was oriented to providing insights on the ways a genre-awareness approach and metacognition contributed to developing metacognitive genre awareness in L2 learners in a TEFL context. Our second research question aimed at investigating the ways in which development of metacognitive genre awareness contributed to learners' critical reading of argumentative genres in the L2. And our third research question consisted of investigating the ways in which metacognitive genre awareness contributed to learners' writing of argumentative genres in the L2. Our research questions are in alignment with research conducted by Negretti & Kuteeva on metacognitive genre awareness in pre-service English teachers (2011). The chapter includes a discussion of the results, a section on implications of the study both theoretical and educational, methodological contributions as well as limitations, and finishes with concluding remarks.

#### **8.2 Development of metacognitive genre awareness**

Our first research question concerned the ways in which an approach on genre-awareness with emphasis on metacognitive knowledge enhances metacognitive genre awareness on L2 learners. This part of the study was divided in two stages: a baseline stage to assess learners' initial knowledge prior to implementation of genre-based writing instruction and a second stage in which metacognitive data would be collected with the purpose of obtaining information on learners' development of metacognitive genre awareness.



For the stage of baseline data we set up the constructs of general metacognitive awareness and initial reading and writing skills from a genre-based perspective to be measured. Thus, we selected two instruments for data collection, the Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI) and a genre-based reading and composition test designed by the researcher. In addition to this, we used the Michigan English Placement Test (MEPT) as a complementary instrument to measure learners' general language proficiency in order to establish their linguistic profile.

Results on MEPT scores showed that learners had a wide variety of language proficiency levels that ranged from basic to advanced (this is a common pattern in the TEFL program at the UPNFM). Most learners were actually placed at high-beginning levels and low intermediate. This was the criteria used to classify the class as novice in terms of language proficiency and in terms of academic skills since they had not been exposed to genre-based writing instruction before. From the sample (N=12), only three students were placed in higher levels of language proficiency, two of them in high-intermediate and one in advanced. The high-intermediate students were José and Ricardo, two of our representative cases, whereas Doris and Rebeca were classified as low-intermediate and basic learners respectively. Both qualitative and quantitative data, led us to conclude that the genre-based performance of these learners was very consistent with their language proficiency level.

Since our study focused on metacognitive knowledge, our initial interest resided in measuring students' knowledge of cognition in its three components: Declarative, procedural, and conditional awareness (Schraw, 1994, 1998; Brown, 1987; Jacobs & Paris, 1987). We used the MAI as the instrument to measure general metacognitive awareness, and more specifically, knowledge of cognition. This instrument showed to be useful in the assessment of general metacognitive awareness as comprised of knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition. In addition, both factors were found to be related. Such results are in agreement with previous empirical findings (see Schraw and Dennison, 1994). The lack of results of MAI scores concerning development of general metacognitive awareness has been related to the lack of specificity of the MAI inventory to L2 writing performance (see Negretti, 2009) and the small sample used in the study. We also call for caution on the interpretation of these results.

To answer this preliminary question in terms of development of metacognitive genre awareness, we adopted two methods of data collection: reflective response matrices (RRMs) and reflective journals. Combining these methods provided a broader picture of learners'

development of metacognitive genre awareness. Metacognitive data were collected on the basis of ongoing reflections provided by the learners during the intervention. Reflections were elaborated on three genre-based tasks: letters to the editors, cover letters and résumés and argumentative essays.

Qualitative analyses of metacognitive data consisted of applications of open and axial coding as suggested by the constant comparative method of analysis (see Strauss & Corbin, 1990) on three sets of data (primary, secondary and complementary). Since our theoretical framework on metacognitive knowledge includes the components of declarative, procedural and conditional awareness applied to genre, we established these as our pre-defined categories of analysis. Systematic analysis and comparison of cases allowed us to establish links between empirical data and our theoretical framework. In addition, further refinement of coding helped us to derive sub-categories and/or properties to establish meaningful relationships as they emerged from the data.

Data show that learners developed a great deal of declarative genre awareness. This is the second most frequent category of the three. Learners develop declarative genre awareness in three different, but related sub-categories: awareness of concepts relevant to task and learning, awareness of the task and learning context, and awareness of the self as a learner or cognitive agent. Learners frequently show awareness of overarching concepts such as genre, scene, situation and aspects of the rhetorical situation such as setting, roles of participants, topic and purpose. They show awareness of these concepts as strategies to apply genre analysis, including knowledge of rhetorical patterns (e.g., format, structure, rhetorical appeals, language and content) and interpretation of patterns. These features are considered crucial to learners' understanding of genre, genre function, and writing processes as embedded in social contexts (a central notion in our genre-awareness approach).

With reference to declarative awareness of the task and the learning context, learners frequently reflect on how a particular task or task goals affect their own cognition or processing of information. They not only reflect on the task *per se*, but also on the factors that surround the task, we refer here to the learning environment. Some of those factors include awareness of task sequence, teaching materials required to complete the task or quality of instructions provided to accomplish the task. Two common properties were identified within this sub-category, awareness of task difficulties and importance of task.

Regarding awareness of task difficulties, novice learners generally reflect upon difficulties they encounter when performing genre-based tasks, e.g., difficulties at understanding and/or distinguishing genre-based concepts—scene, genre, situation—applying genre-based concepts or strategies into the analysis of texts, applying rhetorical and/or contextual aspects to writing within a genre, organizing the writing task. Lack of prior knowledge within the genre—or genre schema—was found to be in close relationship with task difficulty. We observe that in some cases the lack of prior knowledge tends to increase task difficulty, whereas in other cases task difficulty leads to metacognitive self-monitoring or the ability to monitor one's own learning (to be discussed in detail in the corresponding section below). It also appears that when two genres are related to each other and there is enough antecedent genre knowledge (Devitt, 2004) for one of them, cross-genre awareness is facilitated. Cross-genre awareness, in our study, refers to the use of prior knowledge or experience within a genre to acquire a new one e.g., résumés and cover letters, especially when the two types of genres are related and there is sufficient prior knowledge on one of them to acquire the other one.

Novice learners also recognize the importance of genre-based tasks, concepts or activities when they find them interesting or relevant to their own learning and personal needs. This seems to function as a motivating factor that can be useful at enhancing learning. Previous research has recognized the relationship between metacognition and motivational factors (see Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1983; Schraw, 2000). In addition, results on declarative genre awareness indicate that novice learners often reflect upon themselves as cognitive agents especially in terms of whether they are able to achieve the task goals or whether they can meet the expectations of the instructor. This finding is in close agreement with Negretti's results on learner's metacognitive awareness in relation to task perception, self-regulation, and evaluation of task performance (2012). In our data, this sub-category involves both cognitive and affective factors and is in high interaction with declarative awareness of the task. Similarly, Negretti has pointed out the changes in learners' affective factors over time and their relevance in developing an agentic style and personal sense of voice in academic writing (2012).

The variables of task, person and strategies have first been attributed to the model of metacognitive knowledge established by Flavell (1979, 1987) and have been widely accepted as pertinent to metacognitive knowledge in the literature (see Pintrich et al 2000, Garner, 1987). We observe that these variables have emerged in our data as conceptually related to the category of

declarative genre awareness. This category, in our study, encompasses learners' understanding of genre features and strategies, cognition about the task and the learning environment as well as cognition about the self—personal feelings, emotions and beliefs. These findings are congruent with our model of metacognitive knowledge (see Schraw & Dennison, 1998; Schraw & Moshman, 1995), and naturally, that of Flavell's (1987, 1979).

An additional insight is that the components of declarative genre awareness interact with each other. For example, the sub-category of declarative awareness of concepts and strategies was found to be in interaction with awareness of the task and the self. Similarly, awareness of the task was found in interaction with awareness of the self and vice-versa. We argue that sub-components of declarative genre awareness do not occur independently from each other, but in an interactive manner, contributing to metacognitive genre awareness in specific ways. Previous research support findings concerning the interactivity of metacognitive knowledge (see Garner, 1987; Flavell, Miller & Miller, 1983; Flavell, 1985; Wellman, Collins & Glieberman, 1981).

With regard to findings on procedural genre awareness, our data show that this is the most frequent of all categories. Almost all novice learners widely apply this type of awareness to varying degrees. Five sub-categories emerged in our data: awareness of strategies to fulfill rhetorical purposes within a genre, awareness of strategies to perform genre-analysis tasks, awareness of strategies to plan and organize the writing act, awareness of strategies to write effectively within the genre, and awareness of strategies to improve academic performance. From these, three sub-categories were more frequent, awareness of strategies to write effectively within the genre, to fulfill rhetorical purposes within the genre and to perform genre-analysis tasks. It follows that novice learners associate metacognitive procedural or strategic awareness with particular literacy actions, in particular those regarding writing effectively within genres, meeting particular rhetorical needs (learners associate a genre with a rhetorical context relevant to their rhetorical needs) or interpreting academic texts. Individual differences are found in the ways these types of strategies are used and the extent to which learners use them.

In relation to individual differences, our findings suggest that some learners are more strategic than others at using genre-based concepts or strategies. Some of the most common strategies are analyzing the scene, identifying and describing the rhetorical situation, reading about and collecting samples of the genre, using rhetorical appeals and knowledge of the audience to write effectively, or use of language and vocabulary according to the type of genre.

Another finding shows that some learners are more resourceful at transferring their awareness of task difficulty to procedural awareness by using independent strategies such as researching on the web, re-reading the chapters of the textbook, or looking for additional samples of the genre. Other cases show to be less resourceful, however, and were dependent on the teacher's scaffolding or more advanced peers when having difficulties. The connection between task difficulty and activations of genre-based or general strategies was found to be in close relationship with the learners' ability to monitor cognitive performance. In fact, and similarly to previous findings, procedural genre awareness was found to be a highly interactive sub-system in constant shift between the other components of metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive monitoring (see Negretti, 2012, for similar results).

Despite a great deal of transfer of declarative awareness into procedural awareness, data show that in some cases novice learners do not specify the strategies they are intending to use or have used. The lack of nuance at specifying strategies may be a manifestation of verbal-report dilemma and has implications in conditional applications of genre, that is, in situations where genre-based knowledge has to be flexibly used. Conditional genre awareness, according to our data, is the least frequent of all the three categories of analysis. Again, this finding is supported by Negretti & Kuteeva's (2011). Most novice learners revealed instances of this type of knowledge, but in an embryonic manner. They also show that they transfer declarative and procedural awareness into conditional awareness of genre to varying degrees, but they lack the subtleties and details to specify how they apply genre knowledge to meet specific rhetorical goals or particular needs. In a few words, novice learners are not able to adapt their strategies to the particular demands of the task and are not able to verbalize the conditions in which they apply particular types of knowledge.

The lack of refinement in conditional awareness reveals learners' problems at verbalizing sufficiently and precisely how they can adapt their rhetorical knowledge across a variety of academic situations. As said, this seems to be a common difficulty in novice learners. We have attributed this difficulty to a classical problem of access reported previously in empirical studies conducted in children (see Flavell, 1970). These studies reveal that despite children's knowledge of strategies and relevant prior knowledge, they often fail to apply that knowledge in other situations. This behavior is very similar to novice learners in our study. Brown (1974) explains that children, in our case novice learners, tend to associate knowledge of strategies with the

original conditions in which they were learned. Therefore, adapting acquired knowledge to different conditions of learning proves to be challenging for this type of learners, reducing the possibilities for transferring knowledge. We recognize that flexibility and reflection, as suggested by Brown (1987), are two important issues in learners' conditional knowledge that can be influential in learning and development (see more details about these concepts in Chapter 3). In our study, most novice learners demonstrate emerging conditional genre awareness with a few cases of improvement in attempting to apply genre knowledge to other contexts.

We identified some factors that, according to our data, may be critical to enhance conditional genre awareness. One of them is the learners' personal need to fulfill a rhetorical purpose or academic goal, another one is the value of a particular genre or strategy to fulfill a particular need and the third one is the personal motivation at using the acquired knowledge. In some cases, learners show a high degree of intentionality and motivation at transferring generic knowledge to other academic contexts and situations, especially when they are required to comply with complex academic assignments. Although we recognize the importance of these variables at the moment of transferring knowledge to other contexts, they may not be enough for a great deal of declarative and procedural knowledge are also necessary (see Gardner 1987). Furthermore, we find that learning to apply knowledge in conditional manner can be an important factor to enhance high-road transfer of genre-based knowledge, a concept that has been suggested by New Rhetoricians as being the goal of genre-based instruction (see Beaufort, 2007; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). High-road transfer instead of low-road transfer of learning has been found to be relevant in the transferability of knowledge to new situations (Beaufort, 2007). Further research is suggested with regards to the potential of high-road transfer in genre-based instruction on novice learners.

An additional and interesting finding relates to metacognitive monitoring, in our own words, monitoring cognitive performance. We codified this as one more category of analysis. This category can be theoretically associated with metacognitive regulation (see chapter 3 for details). We recognize that monitoring cognitive performance involves self-monitoring and thus it can be interpreted as self-regulatory behavior (see also Negretti, 2012). However, we have not classified this as strictly self-regulatory because our study has not focused on metacognitive regulation and therefore we have not assessed this type of knowledge formally and deeply. Empirically, both metacognitive knowledge and regulation have been found to be interrelated

(Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Schraw, 1998, 1994; Swanson, 1990) and this seems to be a common interpretation in the literature, which implies that different types of knowledge can influence or facilitate other types of metacognition. In our data, declarative awareness of task seems to interact with metacognitive monitoring in some cases.

We notice that novice learners monitor their cognitive performance when developing complex genre-based tasks and/or academic tasks in general. In most cases, they notice the root of the problem, which is often related to task difficulty. When confronted with difficulties, learners apply strategies to repair the cognitive failure. Nevertheless, the degree and/or effectiveness to which they apply those strategies vary. Some of them are more strategic and/or have higher self-confidence and motivation; this kind of learners seems to be more effective at applying strategies. We have identified these as high-monitoring learners. Some other learners, however, are less strategic at overcoming task difficulties and seem to be less resourceful at solving problems. They rely more heavily on the teacher's help as the main cognitive resource in the classroom and are more dependent on external resources. These have been identified as low-monitoring learners. Based on this, it is our assumption that task difficulty may inhibit learning, but in some cases awareness of it may trigger metacognitive self-monitoring.

Our interpretation is that instances of monitoring cognitive performance at this stage are not yet indicators of self-regulatory behavior (nor can we account for this), but they can be a sign of emerging metacognitive regulation. We have found that this can be better explained as instances of metacognitive judgments and monitoring rather than metacognitive regulation *per se* (see Pintrich, Wolters, & Baxter, 2000). According to this model, these types of knowledge are more process-related, reflecting metacognitive awareness and ongoing metacognitive activities when performing a task (p. 48). There are four processes included: Task difficulty or ease of learning judgments (EOL), learning and comprehension monitoring or judgments of learning (JOL), feeling of knowing (FOK), and confidence judgments (p. 48). Based on our data, learners seem to engage in JOLs' type of metacognitive behavior because they are engaged in monitoring online genre-based tasks, they realize that they do not understand something or that cannot achieve the task goal, and then they make attempts to repair the problem. The fact that some learners do not specify which strategies they use, how or why make us hesitant to classify these instances as self-regulatory. We observe the interaction of this type of knowledge with conditional and procedural genre awareness. Because of the shift between these types of

awareness we interpret monitoring cognitive performance to be in a transitional stage between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation in alignment with Pintrich et al (2000).

Moreover, our data support the view that metacognitive knowledge is a highly interactive system (see Garner, 1987; Flavell, 1985; Wellman, Collins, & Glieberman, 1981). Although all of the three types of metacognitive knowledge are theoretically distinct, we have observed that it is difficult to establish boundaries among them. This can also be considered a drawback when researching metacognitive constructs for metacognitive knowledge should be seen as an interactive and fallible system. In general, and to answer our first research question, we conclude that a genre-based approach with a focus on metacognition can contribute to novice learners' metacognitive genre awareness, particularly those ones of procedural and declarative nature. We can also conclude that conditional genre awareness is the least developed of the three metacognitive components in novice learners.

### **8.3 Metacognitive genre awareness and development of critical reading skills**

Our second question concerns the ways in which metacognitive genre awareness translates into critical reading skills. To answer the question, we relied on triangulation of data. First, the qualitative analyses were conducted on the basis of text-based data—genre analysis papers—and results were compared with previous findings on learners' metacognitive genre awareness. Second, results on qualitative data were compared with those obtained from the quantitative data mostly pre- and post-reading test scores to complement analyses. Due to the richness of data and the in-depth description each of the cases entailed, we selected four representative cases for analyses.

Text-based data were analyzed by using matrices of generic features identified on genre analysis papers. Results on matrices indicate that learners transferred metacognitive genre awareness in the analysis and interpretation of argumentative texts in different ways and to different degrees. All learners demonstrate transfer of considerable declarative genre awareness of features and concepts, rhetorical aspects of genre and genre analysis strategies into their critical reading skills. They even seem to notice particular features depending on the genre under study. For example, when analyzing letters to the editor they pay more attention to content, rhetorical appeals, sentence and diction; when analyzing cover letters and résumés they



concentrate on content, format and structure and when analyzing argumentative essays they turn to content, rhetorical appeals and structure.

Learners also display procedural genre awareness to a great extent in their analysis and interpretation of texts but in relatively different ways. To illustrate, one of the learners displays knowledge of rhetorical appeals in his analysis of letters to the editor to approach the audience in convincing ways, but then he shows procedural awareness at using rhetorical patterns—format, language, and diction—to draft cover letters. Another learner applies procedural awareness at using knowledge of the rhetorical situation and patterns to suggest ways to write cover letters/résumés and respond appropriately to workplace scenes. In addition, learners display critical awareness when interpreting rhetorical patterns. They mostly analyze features that situate the genre with the immediate rhetorical context and demonstrate ability to make connections between language and the social context, though in different ways. Learners also demonstrate the ability to interpret complementary genres—cover letters and résumés—we called this cross-genre awareness. In some cases, we observed difficulties at specifying applications of procedural genre awareness, which has been a pattern across tasks. We have explained this as a lack of access that has been found to be typical behavior in novice learners.

Our data also indicate that novice learners display less conditional awareness in their analysis and interpretation of texts compared to declarative and procedural awareness. For the most part, learners seem to be aware of when or why to apply genre knowledge in a situation, but fail at specifying how to use that knowledge strategically. In a few words, learners do not seem to be very flexible nor very selective at using their knowledge of genre when interpreting texts. The closest approximations of conditional genre awareness show a high predisposition or motivation to apply the newly acquired knowledge to meet particular rhetorical needs in a near future (outside the classroom) or improve academic performance in other courses.

To answer our research question, we conclude that metacognitive genre awareness translates into critical reading skills in different ways and to different degrees. Learners commonly display a great deal of declarative and procedural awareness of genre, with applications of conditional awareness to a lesser extent. Thus, using knowledge flexibly and selectively is a required step for novice learners to be effective at transferring knowledge into academic tasks, but this proves to be challenging. We have to consider this as an important factor at the moment of designing and delivering genre-based instruction in EAP settings. These

findings are largely in agreement with Negretti and Kuteeva's (2011) research. This supports our assumption that genre-based instruction and metacognition can contribute to learners' critical reading of argumentative genres in the L2.

#### **8.4 Metacognitive genre awareness and development of writing skills**

This question follows up previous findings on metacognitive genre awareness and critical reading skills. Our main interest, building on Negretti & Kuteeva's (2011) research, is to investigate how metacognitive genre awareness transfers into learners' composition of argumentative genres. As explained, we have relied on triangulation of data by means of qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data this time consisted of writing samples on each of the genres studied in the intervention whereas quantitative data consisted of pre-and post-writing test scores. Analyses were complemented with findings on metacognitive genre awareness and critical reading skills. We continued with analyses on the four representative cases chosen before.

Similar to findings on development of critical reading skills, data suggest that learners apply metacognitive genre awareness into their writing tasks to varying degrees and in different ways. Most of learners' applications of metacognitive awareness into their own writing are consistent with descriptions of metacognitive genre awareness, but discrepancies are also found. Sometimes, learners show awareness of particular types of features, but they are not able to apply or adapt them into their actual writing.

Our data indicate that learners transfer a great deal of declarative awareness of concepts and strategies when writing. Normally, they reveal a good understanding of genre-based concepts—genre, scene, situation—and the genre in general. They also reveal understanding of the rhetorical situation—purpose, participants, and topic—and to a greater extent, rhetorical patterns as strategies to organize, structure or draft within the genre. It is often observed that learners fail at reading the contextual aspects of the writing scene and thus fail at adapting this knowledge to the writing task, e.g., misinterpreting the rhetorical purpose or expectations of the audience. We find that misreading the context of the writing task interferes in the writer's ability to make appropriate rhetorical decisions which increases the possibilities of failing at meeting the task goals (see Flower & Hayes, 1980 for explanation of the rhetorical problem). It becomes

important then to help novice learners understand not only the writing scene, but the context of the writing task. We have also found support for this finding on Negretti's (2012) claim about the interconnection between metacognitive awareness and learners' perception of the task, in which, task perception plays a key role to develop learners' rhetorical consciousness.

Based on our data, novice learners transfer procedural genre awareness across writing tasks in different and varied ways. Learners commonly apply knowledge of rhetorical patterns—content, format, structure, rhetorical appeals, language—to organize, structure, and draft texts. Nevertheless, variation among learners is common. Learners apply certain strategies in a particular writing task, but then fail at applying similar strategies to other tasks or in a different stage within the same task. We have related this finding to the results provided by Breetvelt, van den Bergh, and Rijlaarsdam in their study about the relations between writing processes and text quality (1994). They found that the same cognitive activity may have a different impact at a different stage of the writing process. Even more, one cognitive activity, e.g., reading the writing assignment or goal setting, may affect text quality either positively or negatively depending on the stage in which it is used during the writing task. They conclude that time variable has an important role in the writing process for a similar cognitive activity may have a different function at different points of the whole composing process. From this, we can infer that applying strategic awareness can be characterized by constant change alongside the writing task.

Our data also suggest that learners make significant attempts to apply strategies in academic tasks, for example, using APA style, stating claims, providing evidence to support their claims, or using rhetorical appeals to persuade the audience. These can also be seen as important writing choices. Learners, however, struggle at adapting these strategies to the demands of the task. Very often they show difficulties at using argumentation effectively, using appropriate evidence, reasons or warrants to support their claims or elaborating on rebuttals to counterattack claims. We argue that learners' struggle at applying procedural awareness efficiently has implications in transferring conditional awareness when dealing with more complex writing tasks such as writing critical response papers.

In reference to conditional genre awareness, data show that there is very little transfer into learners' academic writing, showing that this is the least applied of all the three types of metacognitive knowledge. Almost all learners show an emerging conditional awareness in agreement with previous findings. The most common difficulties at adapting genre knowledge to

the different writing tasks are to establish good argumentation, to defend or critique a claim, to use reliable and sufficient evidence to support a claim, to organize ideas logically or to adapt language style to the demands of the audience.

Despite the difficulties observed on transferring genre-based knowledge flexibly, we find that some approximations of conditional awareness to writing are, however, the use of specialized jargon or technical vocabulary according to the topic and needs of the audience and the use of rhetorical appeals in the form of citations or quotations to attack a claim. Another positive outcomes observed in learners' academic writing in general are an increase in self-confidence and critical thinking skills.

## **8.5 Implications of the study**

### **8.5.1 Theoretical implications**

One of the theoretical implications of the present study concerns the metacognitive model applied to the study of metacognitive genre awareness. Such a model includes the predominant view that metacognition comprises both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation (Brown, 1987; Schraw & Moshman, 1995). We support the view that interpreting metacognitive knowledge as composed of declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge can be relevant and useful to researching EAP learners' development of metacognitive genre awareness as previously suggested by Negretti and Kuteeva (2011).

Apart from developing declarative, procedural, and to a lesser extent, conditional awareness of genre, data results show that learners apply monitoring skills, especially when confronted with difficulties or challenging tasks. This led us to include metacognitive monitoring in our descriptive framework. It is our view that a metacognitive knowledge model to analyze metacognitive genre in L2 learners should be expanded to metacognitive monitoring as an integral stage of the model. This finding has also been supported by Negretti in one of her latest research studies (2012). She has found that students' conditional metacognitive awareness provides a way for students to self-regulate themselves through the development of a "personal writing approach" (p. 173). Thus, she proposes a model in which task perceptions, or mental representations of the task, metacognitive awareness of strategies and evaluation of performance

are integrated to explain how and why learners adapt their personal strategies to rhetorical problems.

It is our view then that metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation should be seen as interrelated systems as suggested by previous researchers (see Flavell, 1993; Schraw, 1998; Schraw & Moshman, 1995; Pintrich et al, 2000; Garner, 1987; Brown, 1987). We have interpreted monitoring cognitive performance as a transitional stage in between metacognitive knowledge and metacognition regulation, more in alignment with the model of metacognitive judgments and comprehension as suggested by Pintrich et al (2000). Incorporating a component of self-monitoring will help to account for learners' attempts to problem solve, which in novice learners, has important educational implications. For example, our finding that learners monitor their genre-based learning helped us to classify them as high-monitoring or low-monitoring ones. We believe that this distinction can be useful when devising genre-based instruction in academic settings (this issue will be discussed in detail in the next section).

Our descriptive framework has been expanded to other sub-categories and properties such as declarative awareness of task, the learner and concepts. These variables are congruent with classical views on metacognitive knowledge and can also be valuable at explicating genre-base learning in a more detailed and interactive manner. Our data also suggest that the different types of awareness can be interpreted as sub-systems, and thus, tend to occur in different ways and to different extent, each of them playing a different function within the writing process.

### **8.5.2 Educational implications**

L2 learners in our study show considerable change with regards to strategic awareness in order to fulfill specific rhetorical purposes within a given genre or situation, to perform genre-analysis tasks as a means to interpret texts, and to write effectively within a genre. However, they show difficulties at transferring knowledge due to limited conditional awareness of genre which has implications in the quality of writing and development of academic argumentative thinking. It is our claim that conditional genre awareness is the least developed type of awareness in novice learners and therefore the most challenging one. As a result, conditional genre awareness should receive special attention in genre-based instruction to facilitate transfer of knowledge across academic tasks and situations in meaningful ways.

Current genre-based research has brought to the forefront the importance of investigating how genre-based tasks help novice learners to transfer knowledge to new contexts. In our study, we have found that scaffolding support should be considered an essential component of genre-based writing instruction for novice writers. This would facilitate learning and performance of genre-based tasks, in particular those of complex nature such as writing critical response papers. Scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1987) highlights the interaction between novice and advanced learners and the potential benefits that novice learners can obtain from that interaction to gain more mature stages of learning. For low-monitoring learners, scaffolding can provide systematic support through direct teacher's guidance and feedback, especially at initial stages of genre-based instruction.

Other useful scaffolding strategies to be used with novice writers can be pair and group work to enhance better understanding of concepts and strategies e.g., genre, scene, rhetorical appeals, describing rhetorical situation or patterns. For high-monitoring learners, scaffolding can also be beneficial. In our study, although these types of learners are more resourceful at applying strategies than low-monitoring learners, it was evident that they still needed a great deal of support from the teacher as well as other peers. Another instructional strategy that can benefit both low- and high-monitoring learners are Cmaps. Using Cmaps showed to be a useful scaffolding technique for learners to develop genre-analysis tasks. It is necessary, however, to develop research on the integration of this technologically-enhanced resource into genre-based instruction. In general, it is our view that integrating metacognition with genre-based instruction should include scaffolding support as an integral part of it, especially if targeted to novice learners (see also Johns, 2008).

Our instructional framework favored the critical genre awareness approach proposed by Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi (2004) from the perspective of the New Rhetoric School. Nevertheless, we suggest that a revision of this approach can be refreshing to obtain better and more insights about its usefulness for novice academic readers and writers, in particular, those involved in EFL environments. It is evident that the approach has particular strengths; for example, the enhancement of critical thinking skills and a great deal of strategic awareness.

However, it has also been acknowledged that some features of the critical awareness approach can be challenging for novice learners. The most salient feature is that this approach privileges the analysis of context over text features, a feature that can be challenging for novice

learners accustomed to traditional process-oriented approaches. We definitely observed progressive learning especially when applying critical thinking skills and strategic awareness (see previous results on metacognitive genre awareness, critical reading and writing skills). Learners are able to gradually connect genre to scene and situations, and on a more general level, to connect writing to contexts of situation, yet introducing these concepts takes some time for students to understand due to their abstract nature, at least in the context of the UPNFM. The observed difficulties on the learners' transfer of generic knowledge into their reading and writing skills in conditional ways, that is, in flexible and selective manner, may suggest that the instructional approach needs to build on more linguistic resources and text-based features at initial levels to gradually move on contextual analysis of academic genres (see also Johns, 2011; Negretti, personal communication 2013).

More specifically, the difficulties observed with respect to the task on critical response papers may also be related to the demands that writing and/or responding to argumentation in English inflicts on novice learners, a difficulty that has also been observed in their first language, that is, Spanish (see characteristics of the participants in Chapter 4). Kuhn and Udell (2003) report that adolescents and young adults show serious weaknesses in their arguments because of the difficulties of providing two-sided arguments or to distinguish evidence and explanation in support of their claims (p. 1246). This difficulty has proved to be true to our learners as well. Insights on the transfer of knowledge into learners' writing of argumentative genres can be helpful at designing curricula and integrating scaffolding opportunities for them.

Overall, we embrace the belief that the critical genre awareness approach can be useful for novice writers provided that appropriate scaffolding be integrated alongside the instructional process and according to learners' needs and characteristics. We have also suggested the possibility of adapting or enriching the critical genre awareness approach with successful principles and applications of the EAP and/or the Australian Sydney School, but in particular, with the socioliterate theory and pedagogy proposed by Johns (1987). In addition to this, we suggest that novice writers be provided with language and grammar support when language shortfalls have been found to be an impediment for successful genre-based performance.

## 8.6 Methodological contributions and limitations

It is our view that this study provides support for the metacognitive model suggested by Negretti and Kuteeva (2011) to conduct research on metacognitive genre awareness. This model, which comprises metacognition as sub-divided in the components of declarative, procedural and conditional awareness (see Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Jacobs & Paris, 1987; Brown, 1987, for theoretical views on this model, has been useful to frame L2 learners' development of metacognitive genre awareness. Our results also suggest that the model can be enhanced to observe metacognitive awareness applied to genre-based tasks in more specific ways, that is, categories of analyses on the different sub-components can be used to research particular aspects of genre-based learners. For example, declarative awareness of genre can be broken down into awareness of task difficulty and importance to research about the ways different tasks can influence learners' performance in terms of difficulty or importance and how learners develop monitoring strategies in terms of these two variables. The model can be expanded to components of metacognitive monitoring to provide a better understanding of learners' self-monitoring skills. This is congruent with previous empirical findings that suggest the interactivity and interdependence between both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive monitoring, including metacognitive regulation and task perceptions (see Flavell et al, 1993; Negretti, 2012).

Another potential contribution of the study is the use of multiple methods to collect metacognitive data in educational settings. Reflective response matrices and journals complement each other and provide a wider picture of learners' metacognitive genre awareness. Reflective response matrices are resourceful at capturing a great number of instances of metacognitive knowledge whereas reflective journals seem to be more useful at capturing nuances of learners' affective factors and monitoring behavior relevant to metacognitive knowledge. The lack of experience of novice writers at reporting metacognitive thinking, however, could have interfered in their using RRMS correctly. Additional training and practice on filling out RRM may be necessary for novice writers. Further research is needed on the use and effectiveness of reflective response matrices in academic contexts to collect metacognitive data.

We have also associated the lack of specificity of the MAI to the construct validity of the instrument since it was designed under the theoretical view that metacognition is a domain-



general skill. Whether metacognition is domain-general or domain-specific remains a controversial issue (see Schraw, 1998; Jacobs & Paris, 1987). According to our results, however, the MAI was not very useful at comparing changes on general metacognitive awareness. It is possible that when it comes to educational settings, in particular language-specific settings, metacognition should be taught and assessed in a contextualized manner (see Baker & Cerro, 2000, for contextualization of metacognition to the domain and curriculum). Therefore, making adaptations of the MAI to these particular domains can be an interesting avenue for future research.

As we have mentioned, the small sample size used in the study and the lack of a control group account for the most visible limitations in the quantitative component of our study. Because of the small-scale of the study, our sample has been characterized as a non-probability sampling, in this case, a convenience sampling (N=12). Pre-test and post-test scores were presented as a complement to the qualitative analyses and we did not apply inferential statistical tests. Consequently, we did not interpret differences between pre- and post-test scores in terms of changes of knowledge and skills. Thus, generalizing results was not actually the main purpose of our study but the in-depth description of learners' genre based learning. As a result, we call for caution on the interpretation of quantitative results.

Regarding measurement of writing proficiency, this was also another complex issue because of the use of an adapted test instead of a standard writing test. One issue that could have played a role in the measure of writing proficiency is ecological validity if we consider that certain misalignment could have resulted from the course approach, the final writing task, and the evaluation criteria utilized to assess students' final written performance. The final writing task was designed in such a way that learners could develop a critical response paper in response to one of the argumentative essays previously studied in class. It may be the case that students' perception of the task may have changed due to change of genre in the final task. This genre represented a more challenging task than the ones previously developed in class, e.g., letters to the editor and résumés. Despite the fact that learners were prepared with instructions and discussion of critical response papers, they showed to have difficulties performing within this genre (see results on writing skills). Negretti (2012) has found that mental representations of the task are in intricate relationship with the learners' self regulation or their ability to monitor their writing processes. In addition to this, the assessment criteria used in the evaluation of the writing

task, which was not explicitly available to the students (it was instead explained as part of argumentative writing throughout the content course), may have also influenced their capacity to monitor their writing performance.

Another limitation is that most learners had a wide range of linguistic proficiency in the L2 and in most cases they did not meet the required language level to perform in the reading and writing course. Schoonen and colleagues (2010), for example, explain that proficiency in L2 writing requires of linguistic resources to be able to construct propositional meaning in the form of well-constructed sentences as well as metacognitive awareness to be able to adapt their rhetorical knowledge to the requirements of the task. Schoonen et al (2010) go further and explain that foreign or second language writers bring their L1 writing proficiency and experience to the learning task and can also have less linguistic resources available in the L2. This can explain why it is so difficult for foreign language learners to transfer linguistic or rhetorical knowledge into new writing tasks, and thus, can explain why students participating in the study showed lower levels of performance in the writing assessment task compared to the reading task. Naturally, these results apply specifically to the group of learners involved and the context in which our study took place, and therefore, further research is suggested for concluding results.

We also recognize that the disclosure of information about the purposes of the study, teaching methodology or resources to be implemented as methods of data collection could have triggered the Hawthorne Effect. The disclosure of information, however, could not be avoided due to the pedagogical nature of the study as well, a characteristic that required of supporting students with guidelines and information about the methods, instruments, tasks and resources to be used alongside the intervention. In most occasions, the objectives of the data collection were kept at a general level and students were instructed mostly on activities as part of the instructional process. When taking the MAI, for example, they were instructed that the questionnaire would collect information of study strategies and skills. Due to the intensity of the course, it was observed that students were mostly concentrated on accomplishing the tasks because of their interest in learning and acquiring the skills under study.

Qualitative research is generally characterized by its interest in interpreting and understanding of individual cases rather than generalization of patterns as proposed by the quantitative paradigm. Erickson (in Best & Khan, 1998) alludes to qualitative research methods as being *interpretive* because it requires a great deal of explication and interpretation of the

behaviors observed on the side of the researcher. The strong dependence on the researcher's interpretation may be seen as a weakness to this approach. However, and as indicated by Negretti (2012), "no research method can be completely transparent" (p. 171). In an attempt to reduce bias and potential gaps in the collection of data, we relied on triangulation of data to count on multiple perspectives at the moment of interpreting results. Our study then provides a great deal of qualitative data collected through a variety of written samples of papers (genre analysis papers and samples of argumentative genres) and metacognitive reflections e.g., reflective matrices and journals. The richness of data provides, in our view (see also Negretti, 2012), the authenticity and depth that writing research requires.

### **8.7 Concluding remarks**

This study has shown that using a metacognitive model on metacognitive knowledge as composed of declarative, procedural and conditional awareness can be beneficial to researching the notion of metacognitive genre awareness (see Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011). Such a model, however, should also be expanded to including metacognitive monitoring as an integral part of it (see Negretti, 2012). Based on the ability to monitor their genre-based performance or academic performance in general, learners were classified as high-monitoring and low-monitoring learners. High-monitoring learners are those that are more effective at selecting and applying strategies to repair cognitive failure whereas low-monitoring ones are less strategic at the moment of solving difficulties and tend to rely more on the teachers' scaffolding and guidance.

The results and conclusions also support the assumption that genre-based instruction with a focus on metacognitive reflection contributes to metacognitive genre awareness. Our results support that development of procedural genre awareness is higher in novice academic readers and writers whereas conditional awareness reports the least development of the three metacognitive components. We argue that the lack of applications of conditional awareness has strong implications for learners' transference of genre knowledge to other writing contexts or tasks (see also Negretti, 2012). We also observe that individual differences play a role in students' development of metacognitive genre awareness and the ways they transfer such knowledge into their analysis and production of argumentative genres.

Our findings suggest that genre-awareness instruction and metacognition are highly beneficial to critical reading skills with less of an impact on writing skills. This finding needs to be supported with further research. Genre-based instruction for novice learners should therefore consider opportunities to practice genre analysis intensively and through a variety of learning situations. According to our results, learners need to become reflective and sufficiently strategic so that genre awareness translates into genre performance effectively. Thus, special attention should be paid to conditional genre awareness and to the integration of metacognitive reflection as crucial components of genre-awareness approaches to second language writing.

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## Appendix A

### Course Overview

Week	Topic	Genre-based Tasks (GBT) / Other Assignments
1	Introduction to class, general guidelines and needs analysis	
2	Application of MEPT, MAI inventory and reading and writing test; Ch.1: Understanding scenes of writing; discussing concepts of scene, situation and genre; observing and describing scenes (subject, setting, purpose and roles of readers / writers).	Writing exercises; collaborative writing; journal writing
3	Observing and describing scenes; Ch. 2: Using genres to read scenes of writing; collecting samples of letters to the editor; computer lab session	Writing exercises; grammar exercises and journal writing; writing a reflective essay
4	Genre analysis of letters to the editor; applying strategies for genre analysis (identifying scene/describing rhetorical situation(s); identifying rhetorical patterns; interpreting patterns and features); Introduction to Ch. 3: Using genres to help you write;	<b>GBT#1:</b> Writing a genre analysis paper and writing a letter to the editor on a current topic (independent writing); filling out the reflective response matrix; journal writing
5	Reviewing strategies and guidelines for genre analysis; Discussing and reviewing writing processes; computer session (see <a href="http://www.nicenet.org">www.nicenet.org</a> ); Drafting, revising and getting feedback on genre analysis papers	Grammar practice; journal writing
6	Introduction to Ch. 4: Critiquing and changing genres; collecting and reviewing samples of résumés/cover letters; doing genre analysis of resumes/cover letters;	<b>GBT#2:</b> Genre analysis of the résumé/ cover letter; writing a genre analysis paper and writing their own résumé and cover letter;
7	Choosing a personal style for résumés; exchanging letters to the editor in the virtual classroom Drafting, revising and getting feedback on genre analysis papers; peer review on genre analysis papers; writing résumés and cover letters; computer lab sessions on CmapTools software (building a Cmap on genre features of résumés and cover letters); grammar and vocabulary practice	Reflecting on GBT2: Filling out reflective matrix; journal writing on résumés/cover letters; documenting the portfolio; Practicing CmapTools
8	Reading and writing within academic genres; Intro to Ch. 6: Writing analysis and arguments; reading scenes an situations of argument papers; collecting samples of argument papers on EFL/ESL topics; computer session	Reading Ch. 6; Reading samples of argument papers; reviewing Toulmin's method for structuring arguments;

9	Describing and interpreting generic features of argument papers; analyzing and writing arguments using Toulmin method (claims, reason, evidence, warrants); reviewing fallacies; practicing grammar and vocabulary for argumentative writing ; computer session	<b>GBT3:</b> Genre analysis of the argument paper; building a Cmap on genre features of argument papers; writing a genre analysis paper
10	Drafting, revising and getting feedback on genre analysis papers; choosing an argument paper for critique and evaluation of claim; Cont. Ch. 6: writing with the generic expectations of argument papers (reviewing strategies to meet reader expectations, but also to make personal adaptations to meet their own purposes)	Reflecting on GBT3: Using reflective response matrix and the journal; grammar exercises; documenting the portfolio
11	Getting ready for the critical response paper; building an argumentative analysis Cmap—thinking of a claim (counterargument) or rebuttal and a purpose to achieve in their critical response paper	<b>GBT#4:</b> Planning and drafting the critical response paper; grammar practice and vocabulary; reviewing APA style
12	Drafting, revising and getting feedback on the critical response paper; using sources of documentation; revising APA style; discussing plagiarism in academic contexts; conducting online research; dealing with mechanics and formatting	Finalizing the critical response paper; writing reflective responses; documenting and preparing portfolio for evaluation and assessment
13	Submitting writing portfolio for evaluation and assessment; Application of MAI inventory and reading and writing post-test	

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## Appendix B

### Metacognitive Awareness Inventory (MAI)

#### Metacognitive Awareness Inventory

**Instructions:** Read each of the statements very carefully and mark the option that best describes yourself.

**Student's Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
		True of Myself	Mostly True of Myself	About halfway true of myself	Slightly true of myself	Not at all true of myself
1.	I ask myself periodically if I am meeting my goals.					
2.	I consider several alternatives to a problem before I answer.					
3.	I try to use strategies that have worked in the past.					
4.	I pace myself while learning in order to have enough time.					
5.	I understand my intellectual strengths and weaknesses.					
6.	I think about what I really need to learn before I begin a task.					
7.	I know how well I did once I finish a test.					
8.	I set specific goals before I begin a task.					
9.	I slow down when I encounter important information.					
10.	I know what kind of information is most important to learn.					
11.	I ask myself if I have considered all options when solving a problem.					
12.	I am good at organizing information.					
13.	I consciously focus my attention on important information.					
14.	I have a specific purpose for each strategy I use.					
15.	I learn best when I know something about the topic.					
16.	I know what the teacher expects me to learn.					
17.	I am good at remembering information.					
18.	I use different learning strategies depending on the situation.					
19.	I ask myself if there was an easier way to do things after I finish a task.					
20.	I have control over how well I learn.					
21.	I periodically review to help me understand important relationships.					
22.	I ask myself questions about the material before I begin.					
23.	I think of several ways to solve a problem and choose the best one.					
24.	I summarize what I have learned after I finish doing a task.					
25.	I ask others for help when I don't understand something.					

No	Item	1	2	3	4	5
		True of Myself	Mostly True of Myself	About halfway true of myself	Slightly true of myself	Not at all true of myself
26.	I can motivate myself to learn when I need to.					
27.	I am aware of what strategies I use when I study.					
28.	I find myself analyzing the usefulness of strategies while I study.					
29.	I use my intellectual strengths to compensate for my weaknesses.					
30.	I focus on the meaning and significance of new information.					
31.	I create my own examples to make information more meaningful.					
32.	I am a good judge of how well I understand something.					
33.	I find myself using helpful learning strategies automatically.					
34.	I find myself pausing regularly to check my comprehension.					
35.	I know when each strategy I use will be most effective.					
36.	I ask myself how well I accomplish my goals once I am finished.					
37.	I draw pictures or diagrams to help me understand while learning.					
38.	I ask myself if I have considered all options after I solve a problem.					
39.	I try to translate new information into my own words.					
40.	I change strategies when I fail to understand.					
41.	I use the organizational structure of the text to help me learn.					
42.	I read instructions carefully before I begin a task.					
43.	I ask myself if what I am reading is related to what I already know.					
44.	I reevaluate my assumptions before I begin a task.					
45.	I organize my time to best accomplish my goals.					
46.	I learn more when I am interested in the topic.					
47.	I try to break studying down into smaller steps.					
48.	I focus on overall meaning rather than specifics.					
49.	I ask myself questions about how well I am doing while I am learning something new.					
50.	I ask myself if I learned as much as I could have once I finish a task.					
51.	I stop and go back over new information that is not clear.					
52.	I stop and reread when I get confused.					

Taken from Schraw, G. & Dennison, R.S. (1994)

## Appendix C

### Sample of reading and writing test: Pre-test

**Universidad Pedagogica Nacional “Francisco Morazan”**  
**Department of Literature and Languages**  
**Teaching English Program**  
**Reading and Writing Workshop**  
**Academic reading and writing test**

**Student's Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Part I: Reading Comprehension Section**

**Instructions:** Read the following essay sample entitled “*Education: Losing its value*” at least twice, the first time for general understanding and the second time for detailed comprehension. Answer the questions regarding genre-relevant features such as context, audience, content, purpose and language style. If you are not sure about your answer, try to use your general academic knowledge to give your best try.

#### **Education: Losing its Value**

<sup>1</sup> Today, it seems to be universally accepted that increased education is a good thing. Thousands of colleges and millions of students spend vast amounts of time and money chasing pieces of paper. But what is the value of these qualifications? This essay will discuss whether education has been devalued.

<sup>2</sup> Supporters of education (usually teachers or educators, or those in the business of education) say that increased levels of education will open doors for students. Certificates, diplomas, and degrees are held up as a status symbol, a passport to a private club of money and power.

<sup>3</sup> However, the truly powerful are not those with degrees, but people who stand back and look at what is really important in life. These people are found in every part of society. Like many brilliant people, Einstein was a weak math student. Like many successful businessmen, Bill Gates never completed college. Like many inventive and creative people, Edison never went to school. The greatest religious teachers do not have letters after their name. Similarly, many of the world's political leaders do not have master's degrees or doctorates. These are the people who shape our lives, and they are too busy with real life to spend time in the paper chase.

<sup>4</sup> Students in college are being sold an illusion. They are made to believe that self-understanding and society approval will come with the acquisition of a piece of paper. Instead of thinking for themselves, and finding their own personality and strengths, they are fitted like square pegs into round holes, in so-called professional jobs.

<sup>5</sup> The role of education is to prepare masses of people to operate at low levels of ability in a very limited and restricted range of activities. Some of these activities are perhaps more challenging than the assembly lines of the past, but the ultimate purpose is equally uninteresting. More worryingly, despite the increased level of education, people are still not genuinely expected to think for themselves. In fact, the longer years of schooling make the job of brainwashing even easier.

<sup>6</sup> There is still a role for study, research, and education. However, we need to examine our emphasis on education for the sake of a piece of paper, and to learn the real meaning and revolutionary challenge of knowledge.

**376 words**  
**Unknown author**

Sample essay taken from <http://www.writefix.com/argument/universityeducation.htm> The Argument and Opinion Essay Site for Learners of English

**Part A: Exploring the scene 20% (4 pts each)**

1. Explore the website where the sample essay was extracted and explain what's its main function? To whom is this website oriented?
2. What kind of genre does the essay represent? Why is this genre important to learners of English in academic context?
3. What kind of topics, issues or ideas does this genre address?
4. Who are the writers and the most common readers of this genre?
5. How do writers and readers of this genre usually interact? What are their goals?

**Part B: Rhetorical patterns 30% (5 pts each)**

1. What is the essay's main idea (main claim)?
2. What kind of evidence does the writer use to support his/her claim(s)? How valid is the evidence in terms of reliable sources and academic authorship?
3. What kind of rhetorical appeals are used in the argumentation analysis? Give one example
  - a. Emotional appeal
  - b. Logical argumentation
  - c. Use of trustworthy, authoritative or charismatic image
4. How is the essay organized? What kind of format is it presented? Is its organization effective? Why? Why not?
5. What kind of language is used? Is it formal or informal? What types of sentences are used? Are they complex, compound or simple? Give examples
6. What kind of diction (technical vocabulary, jargon, etc) is used? Is it appropriate to the intended reader? Why? Why not?

**Part C: The Text and its value 20% (5 pts each)**

1. What kind of knowledge does the writer need to have to write an essay like this?
2. Who understands this type of writing? Who doesn't? Why?
3. What is the role of the writer? What is the role of the reader?
4. How is the content of this genre treated? What is considered important?

**Part II: Written Response 30%**

**Instructions:** This part consists of assessing and evaluating the claims made in the sample essay and writing a critical response essay making use of your personal knowledge and insights about the topic and about argumentation in English. Be sure to support your essay with logical and valid arguments/counterarguments and provide clear and powerful evidence (e.g., facts and/or details) on the ground of concrete justifications. You will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The claim in the original essay and how you assess it
- Your argumentation skills and your counterarguments (rebuttal)
- The evidence you provide to persuade the reader (examples, data)
- The reliability of your examples or data (not invented data can be given)
- Your own voice (ideas, personal insights and genre knowledge)

The response must contain about 400 words.

## Appendix D

### Rubric to assess genre analysis papers

#### Writing Grading Rubric

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Writing Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

This grading rubric will be used in the evaluation and assessment of genre analysis papers and other general writing assignments developed in class. It is based on the following elements and scores:

1	<b>Thesis or Claim</b>	The central argument, question or issue addressed by the paper	30%
2	<b>Evidence &amp; Analysis</b>	The quality of the evidence (sources of documentation) used to support the argument or answer the question posed by the paper, and the effectiveness with which they are analyzed to support/justify the claim. Use of logos, ethos and pathos will be evaluated as well.	30%
3	<b>Structure &amp; Organization</b>	The logic, flow, and organization of the paper (does it follow the conventions proposed in class?). Elements like essay structure (external and internal), paragraphing, coherence and cohesion will be evaluated.	20%
4	<b>Style</b>	The use of language, sentence structure, vocabulary, tone, voice and originality	10%
5	<b>Mechanics</b>	Grammar, spelling, punctuation and referencing (APA conventions)	10%

#### 1. Thesis

<b>Excellent</b>	The major claim of the paper is stated clearly at the beginning of the paper. In addition, it is controversial, insightful, and interesting. The thesis responds to a true and important question, tension or problem. The introduction has a clear motive that outlines the controlling ideas of the argument and demonstrates a relevant context for the author's claim.	26-30%
<b>Very Good</b>	The major claim is clear, arguable or interesting but misses opportunities for establishing complexity of analysis or reasoning. The introduction suggests some context for the argument but it does not offer strong motivation or development; the convincing motive might remain implicit.	21-25%
<b>Good</b>	The major claim is clear and arguable, but lacks elaboration or explores an interesting idea that has not developed into a specific claim. The introduction either unsuccessfully motivates the claim or artificially motivates a claim that does not constitute a significant revision of the <i>status quo</i> .	16-20%
<b>Adequate</b>	The paper's major claim(s) are somewhat unclear, unspecific or uninteresting. The introduction lacks a clear motive or contains an unspecific or weak motive.	11-15%
<b>Poor</b>	The major claim of the paper is weak—vague, simple or obvious (states a fact). The paper does not respond to a true question, tension or problem. The introduction usually has no motive or is poorly developed.	0-10%

## 2. Evidence and Analysis

<b>Excellent</b>	The best available evidence is introduced to support the claim(s) and major ideas of the paper. It is drawn from professional, serious and reliable sources.	26-30%
<b>Very Good</b>	All claims are supported with evidence that is relevant and reliable to the development of the argument, but in a few places the link between the claim and the evidence (warrants) may be unconvincing or insufficiently explained. The analysis demonstrates keen insight but also includes arguments that lack subtle details or are insufficiently explained elsewhere in the paper	21-25%
<b>Good</b>	Most ideas are supported with well-chosen evidence which is explored in an insightful way, although subtle details are often neglected. Although there may be gaps in the explanation of how the evidence supports the paper's claims.	16-20%
<b>Adequate</b>	Evidence is generally relevant, but the paper often does not consider the most important evidence or will present multiple examples to demonstrate the same idea. The paper makes some effort to explore the details of the evidence and sometimes it provides insights, but it rarely uses evidence to analyze the argument or develop new claims.	11-15%
<b>Poor</b>	Evidence may be lacking or irrelevant. Instead of using evidence to develop the argument, examples are vague or unexplored. The author may simply summarize and simplify evidence, or present it in a confusing and unhelpful way.	0-10%

## 3. Structure

<b>Excellent</b>	Ideas develop over the course of the paper in such a way that the foundations established early on push the argument towards a complete reasoning and development. The structure is both logical and engaging.	17-20%
<b>Very Good</b>	The argument follows a clear, logical structure, but small gaps, deviations, or lack of transitional language interrupt the flow of ideas in a few places	13-16%
<b>Good</b>	The argument is interesting and logical, but the structure of the paper is, at times, confusing. The paper's claim(s), while reasonable, are executed in a confusing sequence, or they seem related to the thesis, but have a confusing relationship. Transitional language is unsuccessful or inconsistent.	9-12%
<b>Adequate</b>	The argument makes logical sense, but the structure of the paper is confusing—jumping around, missing transitions, or taking on too many ideas at once. The argument may also be presented simplistically, leading to a predictable structure and almost missing transitional language.	5-8%
<b>Poor</b>	The argument may be too obvious and so does not develop over the course of the paper. Or the argument may be incoherent or too broad, without any clear organization or transitions.	0-4%



#### 4. Style

<b>Excellent</b>	The writing is clear and concise, yet sophisticated, demonstrating sentence variety and appropriate diction. It also suggests originality and the voice is engaging and enough personal insight is presented.	8-10%
<b>Very Good</b>	The writing is mostly clear and engaging, but it may contain a few confusing sentences. Tone can be appropriate; the voice seems sincere, but not compelling. The writer is aware of the audience and their interests.	6-7%
<b>Good</b>	The writing is straightforward, clear and sometimes engaging, but it contains occasional confusing sentences or unclear passages. Tone can be acceptable; the writer seems aware of the audience and can include a few personal insights.	4-5%
<b>Adequate</b>	The writing is clear enough and diction is acceptable, but it is weak in some places interfering in the author's ideas, as a result of vagueness, awkwardness or sentence structure. Tone is somewhat inappropriate. Voice is mechanical or lifeless.	2-3%
<b>Poor</b>	The writing is confusing, awkward, or too repetitive. Diction may be inappropriate. Tone is not appropriate either and there is no presence of voice or it is inappropriate and negative.	0-1%

#### 5. Mechanics

<b>Excellent</b>	Shows very little or no grammar, spelling, or punctuation errors. Displays knowledge and correct use of APA conventions.	8-10%
<b>Very Good</b>	Shows few grammar, spelling or punctuation errors. Occasionally, it shows minor errors on references or citations according to APA style.	6-7%
<b>Good</b>	There are several consistent errors in two or more of the areas listed above. In additions, frequent errors on APA conventions are observed.	4-5%
<b>Adequate</b>	There are frequent errors in two or more of the areas listed above including APA conventions (heading, margins, formatting, citations, and references)	2-3%
<b>Poor</b>	Excessive errors in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation blur meaning and makes reading difficult. No use of APA style.	0-1%

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Grading

**An excellent paper (91-100%)**— The paper makes an interesting, complex and relevant argument and is thoroughly well-executed

**A very good paper (81-90%)**— The paper either aims at making an engaging, complex argument but is hindered by a few local problems with structure, analysis, style, etc., or else it has a simpler argument that is generally well-executed.

**A good paper (71-80%)**— The paper addresses the assignment and demonstrates effort to produce a complex argument. However, the essay is hindered by either a lack of complexity, creativity or relevance in the thesis, structural, analytical, or stylistic problems in the execution of ideas.

**An adequate paper (60-70%)**— The paper demonstrates an effort to address the assignment, but the argument is almost too obvious, undeveloped, or obscured by significant structural, analytical or stylistic problems. The author needs to consider help from the Writing Center.

**A poor paper (0-59%)**— The paper has significant problems with argumentation and/or presentation. The author needs urgent help from the Writing Center.

Adapted from [www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/davisgrant/rubrics/Grading-Rubric\\_Morris.pdf](http://www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/davisgrant/rubrics/Grading-Rubric_Morris.pdf)

## Appendix E

### Rubric for assessing letters to the editor

#### Editorial Grading Rubric

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Rater's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Description	Outstanding 13-15	Very Good 9-12	Good 5-8	Needs Improvement 1-4
<b>Focus on claim</b>	There is one clear, well-focused claim with explicit introduction of the problem or issue that clarifies the topic.	Main claim is clear, but general. There is a stated introduction to the problem, but more details are needed to clarify the topic.	Main claim is somewhat clear, but there is need for more development of the problem or issue to clarify the topic.	The claim is <i>not</i> clear. There is not an explicitly stated introduction to the problem or issue. Topic is not clear.
<b>Organization</b>	Details are placed in a logical order and the way they are presented effectively keeps the reader's interest.	Details are placed in a logical order, but the way they are presented sometimes make the writing less interesting.	Some details are not in a logical or expected order, which is distracting to the reader.	There is no clear introduction of the main topic or structure in the paper.
<b>Relevance and strength of ideas</b>	Formulates a thought-provoking, well-developed, and fairly original position on an issue.	Writer takes a clear position on an issue, though it is not fully developed.	The writer's position is evident, but vague.	The writer fails to take a clear position, or contradicts himself/herself.
<b>Evidence and/or reasoning</b>	Provides specific reasons and/or evidence that demonstrates understanding and insight.	Offers adequate – though perhaps vague or incomplete – supporting reasons and/or evidence	Provides less than adequate or contradictory reasons or evidence to support position.	Offers no or only general reasons or evidence, or offers evidence contradictory to the writer's thesis or main idea.
<b>Voice</b>	Author's voice is strong and engaging. Draws reader in.	The writing attracts reader's interest. Author's voice shows engagement with the topic.	Technically well written; however, author's voice is weak.	Writing fails to engage the reader. Writer does not demonstrate interest in topic.
<b>Command of grammar and mechanics</b>	Displays creative word choice and varied sentence structure.	<i>Correct use</i> of grammar and conventions for the most part.	Weak control of grammar and conventions. Errors are distracting.	Use of grammar and conventions interferes with understanding.

Adapted from [www.yesmagazine.org/pdf/education/essay\\_evaluation\\_rubric.doc](http://www.yesmagazine.org/pdf/education/essay_evaluation_rubric.doc)

## Appendix F

## Rubric for assessing cover letters and resumes

## Résumé and Cover Letter Grading Rubric

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Rater's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Description	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement	Total
<b>Presentation, format and structure</b>	The writer uses a clear and organized résumé format and cover letter. It includes more than four identified sections with relevant details and facts. Résumé length is appropriate (1 or 2 pages long) and margins are balanced with bulleted items if necessary. The cover letter contains a heading, inside address, salutation, body, closing and signature.	The writer uses an organized résumé format and cover letter. The résumé contains at least four identified sections with enough details and facts. Résumé length is appropriate and margins are balanced. The cover letter contains all expected parts. In general, this is very good work, but a few details and parts can be added or improved for a more professional look.	The writer makes an effort to organize the résumé and cover letter appropriately. The résumé contains less than four headings and contains some details and accurate facts, but they are not arranged in a logical way. The cover letter may be missing one or two parts. More work is needed for a professional look.	The writer fails at organizing the résumé and cover letter in an appropriate manner, which makes it difficult to understand. Sections and headings are not consistent and there are parts missing; there are very few or no details and use of accurate facts. The cover letter is missing several essential parts. It does not look professional.	
<b>Rating score</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>1-2</b>	
<b>Opening, introduction and objective</b>	The opening header includes complete name, address, telephone, email, mailing address and additional contact details. It includes a believable description of the candidates' skills, strengths and qualities relevant to the position. There is a clear, targeted and concise objective. The information is consistent with the cover letter.	The opening header is complete. The description of the candidate's skills and qualities is appropriate and relevant to the position. The objective is clear, targeted and concise enough. The information is appropriate to the cover letter as well. Overall, the section and content are very good, but not impressive.	The opening header may be missing one or two parts. The description of personal attitudes, skills and qualities is moderately relevant to the position or not accurate enough according to the candidate's profile. The objective is clear, but it can be improved. Some inconsistency is present between the opening info and the cover letter.	The opening header is not complete. There is no or rather poor description of personal attitudes, skills and qualities. There is no targeted objective or if there is one, it is poor or not clear enough. The pertinent information is inconsistent with the cover letter.	
<b>Rating Score</b>	<b>9-10</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>1-2</b>	

Description	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Needs Improvement	Total
<b>Education, selected skills and expertise, accomplishments, activities and/or interests</b>	There is a complete and appropriate section for education, skills or professional expertise, teaching experience, extracurricular activities or related information. They include accurate and relevant details or facts targeted to the job. Personal accomplishments and/or community service can be included but they can depend on the scene of writing. All of the information and details are organized in chronological manner. The cover letter is persuasive enough about the educational and professional profile of the candidate.	There is an appropriate section on education, skills or professional expertise. The sections contain accurate and relevant details organized in chronological manner. The cover letter is persuasive enough about the educational and professional profile of the candidate.	There is a section on education or related information, but it is only moderately relevant. There are a few missing or inaccurate facts or details within the section(s) giving an incomplete picture of the educational or professional profile of the candidate. Chronological organization can be used, though it may not be consistent throughout the résumé. The cover letter may fail in some parts.	These sections are not complete or there is a rather poor description of them. There are several details or facts missing and there is not a chronological order in the organization of the information, and if there is one, is poorly done. The cover letter is not persuasive to the reader; therefore, the candidate does not qualify for the intended job or interview.	
<b>Rating Score</b>	<b>16-20</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>1-5</b>	
<b>Elements of technical writing and rhetorical knowledge</b>	The résumé and cover letter have the required length, are written in brief, understandable, and persuasive form. The purpose of the résumé and cover letter is stated clearly and appropriately showing an understanding of the audience and the scene of writing. The résumé uses the appropriate register or descriptive style and the letter is written in formal language. The tone is respectful and courteous. Both the résumé and the cover letter are thoroughly consistent and highly persuasive.	The résumé and cover letter have an appropriate length and are written in brief and understandable language. They contain a good number of facts about education, professional experience, or other pertinent personal information. The purpose is clearly stated, and the writer uses a formal language. However, some inconsistencies can be found. Both the résumé and the cover letter are persuasive enough.	The résumé and cover letter may exceed length and may need clarity of language. A few details or facts may be needed to clarify the purpose or the claim. There might be some misunderstanding on the side of the reader due to inconsistencies on the use of language style/register, structure or failure to understand the scene of writing of writing. The résumé and the cover letter fail to persuade in some parts.	The résumé and cover letter are too long and facts and details are inconsistent and difficult to understand. The purpose or claim is not stated. The use of language is inconsistent or not appropriate to the situation. The résumé and the cover letter are not persuasive, failing to convince the reader and accomplishing the rhetorical purpose.	
<b>Rating Score</b>	<b>26-30</b>	<b>21-25</b>	<b>11-20</b>	<b>1-10</b>	
<b>Grammar, mechanics and spelling</b>	There are no errors in mechanics, grammar or spelling.	There are some errors in mechanics, grammar or spelling but they do not impede meaning.	There are noticeable errors in mechanics, grammar or spelling. Some of them may hinder comprehension.	The résumé and letter are hard to understand because of frequent errors in mechanics, grammar, or spelling.	
<b>Rating Score</b>	<b>11-15</b>	<b>6-10</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>1-2</b>	

Adapted from Prentice-Hall, Inc., Scoring rubric for résumé and cover letter at <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/rubrics/printable/26757.html> and résumé grading rubric at [www.cathleira.org/ResumeGradingRubric.doc](http://www.cathleira.org/ResumeGradingRubric.doc)

## Appendix G

### Rubric for assessing critical response papers

#### Argumentative Writing Scoring Rubric

Rating Score	Claim (A general statement that contains the argument)
1.	The primary claim seems clear without stating or identifying the specific problem/issue.
2.	The primary claim seems clear and minimal introduction of the problem/issue is presented.
3.	The primary claim is clear but moderate introduction of the problem/issue is presented.
4.	The primary claim is presented and slightly elaborated. There is a moderate introduction of the problem/issue and its significance.
5.	The primary claim is presented and moderately elaborated with somewhat explicitly and specifically stated problem/issue.
6.	A claim with original personal insight is presented with explicitly and specifically stated problem/issue.
Evidence/Reasons (Data that support or justify the claim)	
1.	Evidence and reasons are related, but irrelevant to the claim.
2.	Evidence and reasons are somewhat relevant and connected to the claim, but not strong enough to develop the claim. Poor use of logos, ethos and pathos is shown.
3.	Evidence and reasons are moderately relevant and connected to the claim. Very little development and little use of logos, ethos and pathos.
4.	Evidence and reasons are relevant and connected to the claim and moderately developed. Moderate use of logos, ethos and pathos.
5.	Evidence and reasons are relevant and developed with explicit connection the claim. Appropriate use of logos, ethos and pathos.
6.	Evidence and reasons are convincing, relevant, strongly stated and well developed to support/justify the claim. Very good use of logos, ethos and pathos.
Warrants (Analyses or assumptions that link the evidence and support to the claim)	
1.	A very limited number of warrants are used. The implicit warrants are minimally reliable and not relevant to the argument (primary claim). Warrants include evident logical fallacies.
2.	A limited number of warrants are used. The implicit warrants are moderately reliable and relevant to the argument. Warrants may include logical fallacies.
3.	A few warrants are used. Warrants are reliable and relevant to the argument. Warrants may include some logical fallacies.
4.	A few warrants are used. Warrants are reliable and relevant to the argument. A few logical fallacies are evident.
5.	An appropriate number of warrants are used. Warrants used are reliable and relevant. Very few or no logical fallacies are evident.
6.	A very good number of warrants are used. Warrants are reliable and relevant. No logical fallacies are evident.
Counterargument/Rebuttal (Potential objections to an argument)	
1.	No counterarguments have been mentioned.
2.	Some unimportant counterarguments are stated but not refuted or vice-versa. Or only one counterargument is mentioned, but not elaborated.

3.	Some important counterarguments are elaborated, but not refuted. One or more important counterarguments are refuted, but not explicitly stated.
4.	Some, but not all, important counterarguments are somewhat elaborated and refuted.
5.	Some, but not all, important counterarguments are fully stated and convincingly refuted.
6.	Most important counterarguments have been fully stated and convincingly refuted.
<b>Voice (Writer's genre awareness, topic knowledge, and personal insight)</b>	
1.	The voice is inappropriate and lacks the necessary persuasion to reach the intended audience.
2.	The writer's voice is monotonous and mechanical. The writer's is involved or distanced from the topic/audience/context in general. The text is primarily involved with knowledge telling without any personal insights.
3.	Some emotional language is used. The writer seems aware of the context in which the genre is produced and its intended purpose and audience by adding few personal experiences or insights to build up new knowledge. One or two points seem intriguing and engaging.
4.	The voice seems engaging or authoritative on the topic. The text is appealing or even personable to some degree. More than two points are intriguing and contribute to a better reasoning and understanding of the issue.
5.	The voice is engaging and displays authority on the topic. The displayed reasoning and argumentation can potentially contribute to generating new knowledge or a different perspective on the issue.
6.	The voice is engaging and full of personal insights. The writer shows awareness of genre-relevant features (especially context, audience and purpose) and contributes to persuasion or action on the addressed topic/issue.

Adapted from Cheng, F-W., 2010 and based on Connor's (1990) & Yeh's (1998) analytical schemes for writing assessment.

## Appendix H

### A sample of reflective response matrix

**Description of task:** This is a self-reported instrument intended to capture students' declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge of concepts, strategies and ideas regarding genre knowledge of (name of genre-based task). Students filled out the instrument after having developed genre analysis of (name of genre-based task), written the genre analysis paper, and written their own sample. Originally, the instrument is suggested by Schraw (1998) to be used as an instructional tool in order to improve students' knowledge of cognition. He refers to this instrument as strategy evaluation matrix. In my study, the instrument has been adapted to collect students' metacognitive genre knowledge.

Reflective Response Matrix			
Student's Name: <u>Rebeca</u>		Entry#: <u>1</u>	
Genre analysis task: <u>Analysis Letter to the editor</u>		Date of Entry: _____	
What to use (1)	How to use it (2)	When to use it (3)	Why to use it (4)
<p>The genre analysis is when we do a critical reading of people's pattern or behavior of communication in different situations within A scene.</p> <p>Argumentation is part of us everyday activities, the propuse to discover some Version of the thru. There are some kind of argument of fact, of definition and an argument paper involved analysis of a subject</p> <p>Process of writing strategies inventing, drafting, and presenting.</p>	<p>We can read the scene and genre in order to now people behavior and then we now what is the genre and how To act within then.</p> <p>we have different strategies to apply the new knowledge for example in the genre analysis that we did we collect samples of letter to the editor and then we analyzed all of them and this way we decided what and how to White.</p>	<p>I think we can apply the new knowledge in all the that we do in our life in order to know How to interact whit other. or to do a critic about something and when we want to convince people About our ideas.</p>	<p>I think it is effective because when we use that strategies our ideas are more clear y we can decide and know what is happening in a scene</p>

## Appendix I

### A sample of reflective journal

**Description of task:** This task was required to collect data on students' reflections about their writing processes, use of strategies, and perceptions about their own learning and learning in general. In my study reflective journals were particularly intended to capture students' metacognitive aspects of genre, writing and learning in general.

**Student's Name:** Rebeca

**Entry #:** 1

**Genre analysis task:** Introduction to the class

**Date:** September 25, 2013

*-- Since reading and writing workshop began I have learned about scene, situation, and genre within a scene. That is important to know if we want to write an essay and how I can include that knowledge in real life. I understand that scene can be a place, and I can read and analyze that scene in order to know how to act in this place. For example, ... (provides an example of interaction in class). It was difficult for me to understand the three terms because when I apply that into real life, I feel confused. I think that I need to do more examples... When I did the second exercise in class, I understood better. After two weeks, I could understand the three terms better. If I want to become a good writer and to learn how to analyze and read a scene, I know I need more practice.*



## Appendix J

### Matrix on genre features across genres: Representative cases

Genre analysis procedure	Genre Features	Number of features per genre												Total number of features
		Letter to the editor				Cover letter/Résumé				Argumentative paper				
		Rebeca	Ricardo	Doris	Jose	Rebeca	Ricardo	Doris	Jose	Rebeca	Ricardo	Doris	Jose	
Conceptualizing genre/Identifying the scene and describing the rhetorical situation (Awareness of context)														
	Scene, genre and situation	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	4	1	2	1	2	25
	Setting	1	1	1	2	1	1		1	3	1	1	1	14
	Subject	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	14
	Participants	2	5	1	5	2	2	1	2	1	5	2	1	29
	Purpose	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	20
	Content		3	2	2	1	3	2	2	5	5	7	7	39
Identifying and describing rhetorical patterns (Awareness of form)	Format	1	3	1	1	1	5	3	4	1	1	1	1	23
	Structure		1		1	1	2	3	2	3		1	3	17
	Rhetorical appeals	1	1		4	3	2		2	3	4	3	3	26
	Sentence	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	1		1	1	2	16
	Diction		3		3		1		1		1		2	11
	Others		2	1	2		1		1				7	7
	- Beliefs, values or knowledge shared or needed to participate within the genre	1	7	1	5	2	1	3	1	1	5		2	29
Interpreting features and patterns (Thinking critically about the genre)	-People invited and excluded within the genre		1	1	1	1	1	1	1					7
	- Participants' roles, attitudes or behavior encouraged through the genre			1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	1	15
	- Treatment of subject and importance of content		1			1	2	2	1		3	5	2	17

	- Attitudes towards the readers and the world		2		2				2	1		1	2	1		11
	-Actions made possible or restrained by the genre		1	3	2	2		3	2	3		1				17
	-Others															5
	<b>Total number of features</b>	10	36	20	42	22	32	30	33	22	35	30	30			342

Total number of features per case					
Case	LE	CL/R	AP	Total	
Rebeca	10	22	22	54	
Ricardo	36	32	35	103	
Doris	20	30	30	80	
José	42	33	30	105	

## Appendix K

### Sample of resume

Student's Name  
Main Street, La Era neighborhood  
E mail: -----  
Cell-phone: -----

---

#### High School Teacher

Gifted and goal achiever teacher, liable of fulfilling high standards of educational institutions. Laborious, passionate, outgoing and quick to build rapport among colleagues and students. Demonstrated commitment and thrive toward excellence in teaching performance.

#### Areas of Expertise include:

- Teaching strategies
- Learning styles
- Students assessment and evaluation
- Theories of second language acquisition
- Writer's workshop
- Cooperative learning.
- Communicative Approach, among others.

#### EDUCATION

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##### Bachelor of Arts

Universidad Pedagógica Nacional Francisco Morazán August 19th, 2013

##### Perito Mercantil y contador Público

República de Francia High school November 14th, 2007

##### EFL Certificate

Eight levels of English, Instituto Hondureño de cultura Interamericana (IHCI)

##### Primary Education

Miguel Andonie Fernandez School

#### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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**ESL Tutor** - tutoring kids of different bilingual schools and adults for 2 years so far, from which I have received their acknowledgement due to the quality of teaching and assessment they have be given in each of the sessions.

**Reading Tutor** –working in a reading center at UPNFM, giving the English student of the UPN advice on reading choices and providing them with a comfortable environment to read.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

---

Four skill proficiency, curriculum development, Discipline in the classroom, learning methodology, classroom environment, assessment, evaluation, authentic material and teaching English using real life situations.

### **TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY**

---

Microsoft word, excel, power point, Encarta encyclopedia, English discovery online, Cmap tools, internet, windows, and social networks.

### **ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS**

---

-Volunteer in a program called Centro de Desarrollo Integral (CDI), helping kids to improve in their school classes.

-Volunteer in a group called “young saving young” in a Japanese association (AMDA). Development of sports, mainly in soccer and athletics.

-Member of the student association at UPMFM

### **REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

- 
- Licda. -----  
English Professor Universidad Pedagógica Nacional  
E-mail address: mondragonhung1@gmail.com
  - Lic.. -----  
English Professor Universidad Pedagógica Nacional  
E-mail address: miguel pazgarcia@gmail.com
  - Ph.D. -----  
English Professor and Coordinator of the Writing Center at Universidad Pedagógica Nacional  
E-mail address: glori22@gmail.com

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